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BACK FROM DUTY: 2

More Stories from Ozaukee County's Veterans



Lee Wiskirchen (third from right) and fellow local sailors await their train at the Port Washington station.

The Ozaukee County Veterans Book Project

Edited by Laurie Arendt

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BACK FROM DUTY: 2

More Stories from Ozaukee County's Veterans

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A second tour of duty

This book is dedicated to those men and women
who have given their lives in service to our country
and to those who have come home
and shared their experiences with us.

You will never be forgotten.

There are no roses on a sailor's grave,
No lilies on an ocean wave.
The only tributes are the seagull sweeps,
And the teardrops that a sweetheart weeps...

- Anonymous, based on a German naval hymn

Back from Duty: Ozaukee County's Veterans Share Their Stories is published by the Ozaukee County Council of American Legion Posts, an umbrella organization of the seven Ozaukee County American Legion Posts:

Howard J. Schroeder Post #457, Mequon
Peter Wollner Post #288, Cedarburg
Rose-Harms Legion Post #355 Grafton
Landt-Thiel Legion Post #470 Saukville
Van Ells-Schanen Legion Post #82 Port Washington
Warren Kane Legion Post #410 Fredonia
Memorial Post #412 Belgium

Dan Grotkiewicz, Commander
Kevin Dressell, Vice Commander
Robert Shappell, Adjutant/Financial Officer
Ken Brown, Service Officer
Pauline Shappell, Judge Advocate
Dick Engert, Historian
Matt Diker and Bob Weyker, Sergeant at Arms
Carl Oeldemann, Chaplain

Ozaukee County's Legionaries also currently serve in the following capacities:

Bob Batty, Second District Vice Commander
Tom Ingram, Second District Vice Commander
Norbert Kirsch, Second District Adjutant
Ronald Kuta, State First Vice Commander
Carl Oeldemann, Second District Chaplain, State Chaplain
Steve Shock, Second District Sergeant at Arms
Charlie Watry, Second District Commander

Ozaukee County is also the home of Al Richards,
Past State American Legion Commander (2004-2005)

This project would also not be possible without the continued support of the fellow veterans of the county's V.F.W. posts and the Leatherneck Club of Port Washington.

Laurie Arendt, editor
Carol Reichelt and Kay Dahlke, cover art direction

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A second tour of duty

Reading the Back from Duty books is a multi-sensory experience for me. I feel very fortunate that when I page through this book - and the one that preceded it in 2002 - I not only read the words, but in many cases, I actually hear the men and women speaking those words in my mind. When I look back on the experience, it is very difficult for me to single out specific experiences or memories because much of it is woven together.

In doing this project, so many people have asked me what I have enjoyed and disliked about the process. It's hard for me to say what I enjoy the most because there are so many satisfying aspects. The hardest part is, ironically, very easy to point out. Part of this project requires me to say goodbye.

Since the publication of the first edition and as of early November 2005, 22 participating Back from Duty veterans have passed away. I did not know the first two very well, but I spent an entire afternoon with the third veteran, whose mind was as sharp as a tack and who could easily still fit into his WWII uniform. He showed me all his photos, including multiple photos of his sweetheart, Martha, whom he came home to marry.

The very first person to sign up for the second book, World War II Naval veteran Alan Hauck Sr., passed away before he could be interviewed. Four veterans who were interviewed for this project have since passed away and their pages are particularly poignant for me.

While I am realistic enough to understand that time does pass, the men and women in these two books represent the best of America as it passes from generation to generation. They are good people, and many are now my good friends, and it is hard to see them go.

There is a saying in the very last pages of the book that really sums up why this project needed to happen:

*Call our our names as the years go by
Remember us and we shall never die.*

I strongly feel that it is our duty, as family members, as civilians and as friends, to ensure that this continues to happen. We need to pass on a healthy respect to our future generations for those who continue to serve our country. It is the least we can do to show our thanks for what they have done for us.

This is an easy task for all of us if we are willing to take the time to do it. Sit down with the veterans and talk with them. If they don't want to talk about their experiences, it is even more reason to offer a simple and heartfelt "Thanks for a job well done." Do your part to welcome someone home from Korea or Vietnam right now. Some of these men and women have yet to hear those simple words.

Shake the hand of the next person you see wearing a Legion, VFW or other veterans' organization coat or hat. Use that spare change to buy a poppy. Walk through your local cemetery next Memorial Day and think about those decorated gravestones.

Attend a Memorial Day parade or Veteran's Day ceremony with your family. When at a parade stand quietly, take your hat off and place your hand over your heart as the American flag passes by. Teach this respect to your children and grandchildren. The flag is a powerful symbol for veterans, and now as well for me. It represents more than our country: It represents every single veteran that you will find in the pages of this book.

To the veterans in this book, I thank you for opening your scrapbooks, your memories and your hearts to be a part of this project. For some of you, this was a courageous step and I'm glad we took it together.

Laurie Arendt
Editor

November 2005

Acknowledgements

This second edition of this project would not have been possible with the support and work of all of those participants in Back from Duty:1. Their work provided the foundation, encouragement and enthusiasm to create a second edition.

In addition, the following people provided additional financial support for Back from Duty: 2:

Jerry Konkel
George Kohlwey
Robert and Lynette Ponton

Donations given in support of this project were used entirely for the printing and production costs.

We thank Nicholas Fieber for his work in interviewing his grandfather, Orville Arendt, and Andrew Wilhelme, for his work in interviewing his grandfather, Jerry Herbst.

This edition also relied on a cadre of volunteer adult interviewers to complete the project. There would not be a second edition without the help of the following interviewers:

Allen Buchholz
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Mark Jaeger
Jeanne Mueller
Ruth Oehme
Agnes Paulin
Laurie Schwalbe
Sheri Schwalbe
Nick Schanen
Vicki Schanen
Cindy Schaefer
Susan Smith

We especially thank proofreaders Allen Buchholz, Jeanne Mueller and Jane Roehrig.

We also thank the *Ozaukee Press* for their permission to use the photo that appears on our front cover.

Our sincere appreciation also goes out to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, a willing partner in our project. All of the tape recordings of the interviews used in this project are now part of the museum's holdings in Madison. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum, as well as the Ozaukee County Veterans Book Project, are registered participants in the national Veterans History Project.

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum is actively soliciting oral histories from Wisconsin's veterans. If you are a veteran and would like to share your story, call the museum's Research Center at (608) 267-1790 or go to http://museum.dva.state.wi.us/RC_OralHistory.asp.

Dave Albert

Served with the Marines in Korea

1st Lt. Dave Albert served with the Marines in Korea from 1950 to 1953. He was part of the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions during the Korean War. He was discharged from the Marine Corps on August 14, 1953.

He landed in Korea on the night of the Inchon Landing on September 15, 1950. He was part of the 1st Marine Division and served with the 1st Marine Division in the Pusan Perimeter. He was discharged from the Marine Corps on August 14, 1953.

He served in Korea from September 15, 1950, to August 14, 1953. He was part of the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions during the Korean War. He was discharged from the Marine Corps on August 14, 1953.

The profiles in this edition of Back from Duty are arranged in alphabetical order except in instances where spouses have been interviewed.

In these instances, liberties have been taken with the alphabet to ensure that they are on facing pages.

An index of veterans by service period/area of service appears in the back of the book.

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Dave Albert

Served with the Marines in Korea

Mt. Horeb native Dave Albert had already served a full year of active duty as a Marine before joining a Marine Reserves unit in nearby Madison. That Reserve unit was activated with the escalation of hostilities in Korea and was called to active duty on August 28, 1950.

We landed in Korea on the Marine Corps birthday - November 10. We were part of the 1st and 2nd replacement draft, 4,000 Marines on two troop ships. The First Marine Division landed at Inchon on September 15, 1950 and were to shore up the Division. I remember it dawned on me that we had lost quite a few men as they needed us so quickly.

They sent us as individuals to our new assignments. When I'd originally served on active duty, I worked in personnel administration, so I think that was probably why I was assigned to a Signal Battalion. However, all I did was guard duty, and I didn't go to Korea to be a guard. I asked to be transferred. I wanted to see some action.

I was sent up to the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines as part of an ANGLICO unit, which was a joint unit that called in Navy gunfire. Though I was up north, I was still in a rear echelon and out of range.

They were looking for volunteers to become wiremen, so I said, "Well, sign me up!" We were at the Chosin Reservoir and all of a sudden there were 100,000 Chinese attacking us. I became a rifleman instead of a wireman. We fought our way from Yudam-ni to Hagaru to Koto-ri, and then as a division, we fought our way to Hungnam.

After that battle, our ANGLICO unit was reformed. I thought I would be on board a ship, but I wasn't. I was assigned to the 65th Regimental Combat Team, which was comprised of soldiers from Puerto Rico and Korean soldiers. The first night that we were with them we got into a good firefight, all I could hear were foreign voices and I thought for sure that I had been surrounded and captured.

I spent the next 14 days calling in Naval gunfire from the USS Missouri and other ships in the harbor. There I was, a Private First Class, telling the USS Missouri what to do! The ship was stationed 20 miles out in the water and it was protecting evacuating troops. We were on the ground and when we'd call in the fire mission, we could see the sparks going off the shell as it passed through the air.

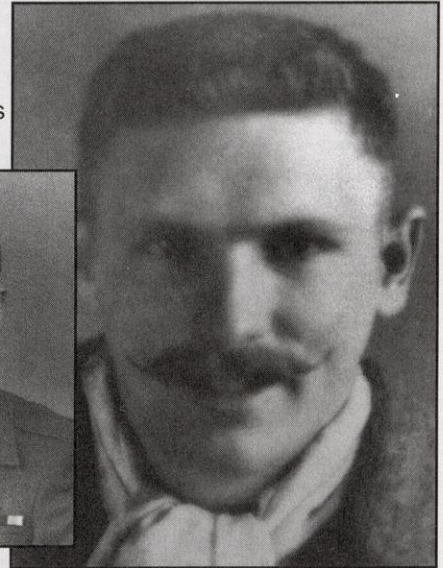
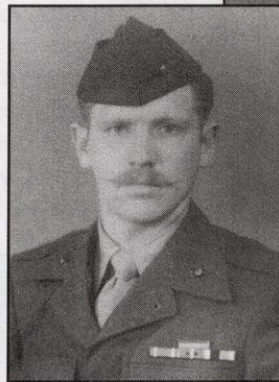
It was a little while later when my feet started to bother me. I'd gotten frostbite at the Reservoir. I was in quite a bit of misery. I ended up being hospitalized for three weeks. When I was discharged, I ended up getting assigned to a different team, which was part of Chesty Puller's regiment. I ran into him in 1958 at a reunion and told him I'd served under him and wanted to buy him a drink. He said, "No, let me buy you one!" He started fumbling around - he had quite a shine on - and there were \$20s and \$50s falling out of his pockets onto the floor. There was a Lieutenant Colonel on his knees picking up all the bills that had fallen on the floor.

I did end up volunteering to go serve with the British Royal Marine Commandoes for seven months. We were in Wonsan Harbor, which was their staging area. We supported them on their raids blowing bridges, railroad tunnels/tracks and mining roads and I called in the naval gunfire. Most of the time, what I did was really a matter of self defense. If I didn't knock out the mortars, I was in trouble myself. This was also the assignment that led to my being awarded the Purple Heart and decorated with two Navy Commendation medals with Combat "V"s.

Though we served with the Royal Marines, we were still American Marines. We still had British rations: Steak and kidney pudding, mutton and rabbit. We also had a daily rum ration.

When I served, the edict was that nobody had to spend more than one winter in Korea. After a bit of travelling back and forth from Japan to Korea to get my orders, I ended up in a casual company in California. I was assigned guard duty and I said, "I just got back from Korea; I'm not doing guard duty!" and I complained to the first sergeant, who just happened to be a gunnery sergeant I'd run into in Korea. He said, "I never expected to see you again." He asked if I had a car and when I said yes, he ended up giving me leave plus 10 days travel time to get home. I spent more than 30 days at home before reporting to Camp Lejeune for my discharge.

In looking back, I had a real adventurous year.



(above) Dave right after returning from the Chosin Reservoir.
(left) Dave says that serving as a Marine was a true privilege.

Douglas Ahsmann

Aviation Boatswain's Mate

Port Washington resident Douglas Ahsmann was a self-described "airplane nut" when he enlisted in the Navy in 1948 at the age of 18. He wanted to become a career pilot, but things didn't quite work out that way.

The recruiter sure led me down the wrong street. Because I was such an airplane nut, he said that I had a very good chance of becoming a pilot if I joined the Navy. At that time, the Navy needed pilots. I thought that it would be a good idea to go in the Navy and get trained, and then maybe I'd have a chance of becoming a commercial pilot. But what I didn't know was that you couldn't be a pilot if you were colorblind! I didn't find this out until after I started boot camp and by then it was too late.



(above) Doug as a young recruit at Great Lakes. (right) His tours offered him the experience of a lifetime - from riding trails in the Andes to meeting the Pope in Italy. Here's Doug with his friend, Lyle Olsen, at Gitmo, Cuba, after enjoying a few bottles of Hatuey in the early 1950s.



I did end up getting a top deck job once I finished my training. I became an aviation boatswain's mate on the USS Philippine Sea CV-47, an aircraft carrier.

We didn't have much free time. We spent a lot of our time keeping things clean because everything had to be rust free, and the salt water could sure do a number on things.

I also had a battle station, which, since we weren't under attack at war, I didn't spend a whole lot of time in. My battle station was a bulletproof, explosion-proof compartment located between the hangar deck and the flight deck. I would be locked in there with some battle rations and water and I'd had to observe all the planes. I snuck in rags to read, but the captain's area would call in and check on the condition of this or that just to test me.

In terms of our living conditions, our quarters were right under the catapult area - they called us the "airdales." There were big hydraulic cylinders that fueled the catapults that catapulted the planes off the flight deck. They'd go from 0 to 80 mph like that. Because they were so powerful, they were quite loud. You had to learn to sleep through it, so even now, I can sleep through anything.

The USS Philippine Sea took a cruise to the Mediterranean. It was really a goodwill tour to befriend the people and bolster the economy. We went from port to port - and we had the opportunity to do some sightseeing. I never missed a trip - I had an audience with the pope and I found him to be very

congenial and down to earth. He thanked us for being there.

I won a chance to be in a pool of 40 people from the ship to be part of an entourage that went to Paris. All I can say is that Paris was a different place, that's for sure. While I was in France, I bought perfume for my aunts for 5 percent of what it cost back home.

Due to cutbacks in the military, shortly after I returned home, I was discharged. In lieu of active duty, I had to be in the Inactive Reserve for six years. I was helping my dad farm in Michigan and I had started my own trucking business when I was called back in because of the growing Korean conflict in 1952.

I was assigned to the USS Oriskany CV-34, an attack aircraft carrier. It was too big to fit through the Panama Canal, so our two choices were to go through the Bering Strait or around Cape Horn to get to Korea. Since relations were a bit cold with Russia, we did a South American tour. I remember when we got close to the cape, we had helicopters up with lights to look for icebergs. Because of the violent storms, no planes were being launched and I spent my time sleeping in a gun tub, but I was always on call.

I had some equally interesting experiences on this tour as I did when we went to the Mediterranean. I bought duty free gold in the Andes. I don't have it anymore though. It was stolen after I was in a car accident (I stored it in the trunk of my car). What I didn't get to do was actually go to Korea. We stopped in Hawaii, and that was where they realized they had some short-timers on board. It made no sense to send us to Korea, so we disembarked and they sent us back. I was attached to Miramar in California for about six months until my time was up. They had to find a job for me, so I became master of arms in the galley. Now those were wonderful orders; I ate like a king the whole time I was there!

CSM (ret.), Dennis Ansay

Career Combat Engineer in the U.S. Army

Port Washington native Dennis Ansay was working at the Columbia Garage while he waited for his draft notice. In 1972, it finally arrived. Though he initially thought he would stop after he fulfilled his two years, Dennis went on to retire from the Army in March 1994.

I won the lottery in terms of the draft; my number was something like 56 or 57. I thought that going to Vietnam would be part of the deal, but it wasn't. I never did end up there, I was right at the tail end of the draft and when I had the "opportunity" to volunteer, it was right at the point when Nixon said he wouldn't send any more troops over to Vietnam.

I left Port Washington on the same day as Chico Poull. We were on the same flight, but after that we were split up although we both ended up at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo. I hated being there - they didn't call it Ft. Lost-in-the-Woods for nothing. After basic training, my advanced training kept me right at Ft. Leonard Wood.

Though, to tell you the truth, I was actually pretty indifferent. I figured that since the military had me for two years, they could pretty much do what they wanted with me. I remember doing a lot of running there and we had free time at night (I drank a lot of beer at night).

After AIT, I reported to Ft. Dix and then on to Frankfurt, Germany. I was sent to Bad Kissingen and I remember thinking, "Bad - Hmmm. If they start a city's name with bad, that can't be good."

But it wasn't. I met my wife there. A friend of mine invited me to celebrate Christmas with him, and she was his landlord's daughter, although I initially mistook her for the maid.

I was a combat engineer, but other than spending a lot of time in the field, we did a lot of German American projects. At one point, we built a soccer field for a local community.

My time was actually up in August 1974, but my first sergeant convinced me to stay another 10 months. I received an honorable discharge the following year, went home and worked at Mercury Marine for awhile. I decided to go back in when they offered to send me back to Germany. Once I agreed to it, naturally they sent me back to Ft. Leonard Wood instead as part of the 5th Engineers.

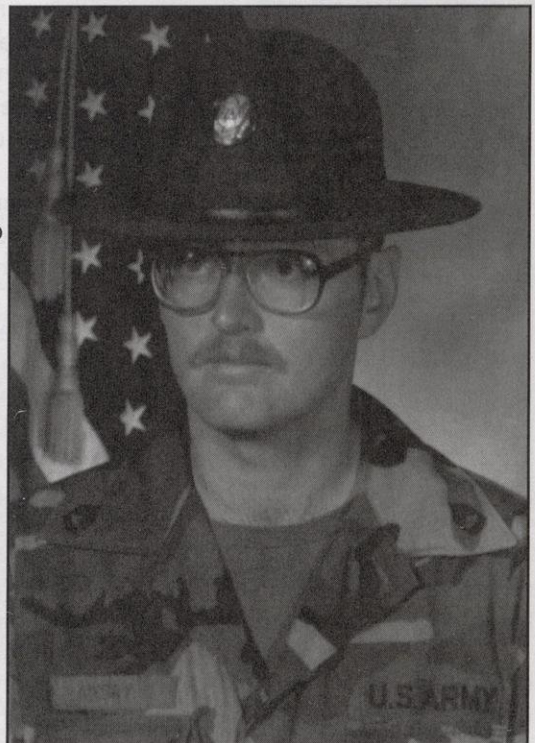
Eventually though, I did get an assignment to Germany and ended up at Schwetzingen, near Heidelberg. It was a pretty good assignment, although I spent a lot of time there living in the woods. They would actually bus our wives out to see us every once in a while for a family day. I was a platoon sergeant for a float bridge company.

Of course, I then received a new assignment. It was back to Ft. Leonard Wood to be a drill sergeant. It wasn't my choice - in fact, if you put in for drill sergeant, they'd send you to a psychiatrist. It was a pretty intense 12-week course. It wasn't terribly difficult being a drill sergeant - I think everybody is kind of schizophrenic to some degree. I always thought of it as a role to be played. The days were long, though. I'd report at 4:30 to 5:00 a.m. and wouldn't get home until 6 or 7 p.m. We'd work 13 weeks and then have two weeks off.

My next assignment took me to Heilbronn, Germany, which was more of an industrial part of the country. That was a time in my life when we did a lot of recreational travel through Europe. When I look back, it was really more of a question of "Where didn't we go?" than "Where did we go?"

In 1989, I returned to the United States and became a staff member at West Point in New York. I tried to be assigned to Marquette University, but that wasn't an option. I became the Regimental Tactical NCO and worked with the cadets. In late 1991, I was assigned to 3rd Army, in Atlanta, Ga., my family moved to Port Washington and I became a geographic bachelor, coming home when I could. I had to do a lot of traveling and later on in the year, went to Muscat, Oman. It was a pretty good deal all around. I lived in the Hotel Intercontinental, received combat pay and drove a Mercedes jeep. I figured if I was going to be a geographic bachelor, I'd make the best of it.

My last assignment took me back to -where else? - Ft. Leonard Wood as the Command Sergeant Major of the 554th Engineering Battalion. I retired in 1994 as a command sergeant major and returned home to my wife and family.

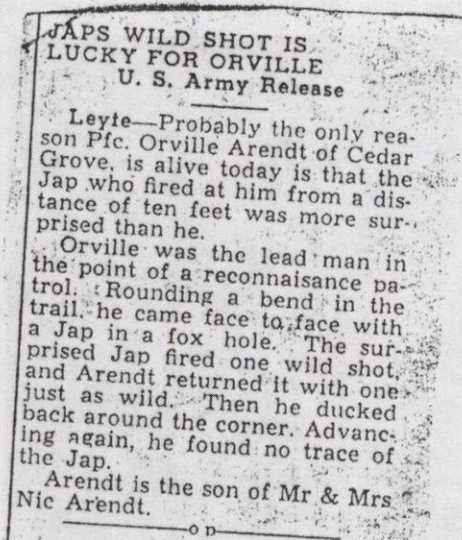


Though he always served with the Army's Combat Engineers, Dennis had a variety of job duties during the three decades he served, including drill sergeant.

Served in the Admiralty Islands Campaign

My grandpa, Orville Arendt, volunteered for service when he was 20 years old. He was assigned to the 1st Calvary Division, 7th Calvary Regiment. He returned home with a number of medals, including the Bronze Star, seven Major Battle Stars, a Purple Heart, the American Theater Service ribbon, Asiatic-Pacific Theater Service Ribbon and Philippine Liberation ribbon with two Bronze Stars.

While on New Guinea, on Christmas Day during recreation time, a group of soldiers went swimming. As I was running into the water, I fell into a bomb crater and was sucked underwater by the swift current. Fortunately, my friends rescued me on the third time I came to the surface. I was unconscious for about four hours. The water wasn't pumped out of my lungs - there were no lung pumps available - and I developed pneumonia, yellow jaundice and malaria. I was in the hospital for several weeks.



This article appeared in the *Press*, 1944.

From New Guinea I was sent to the Admiralty Islands where we encountered our first combat ... on the front lines. We were in continuous combat and lived in fox holes. Our only source of food was K rations. We had one uniform to wear and one pair of boots. At night we dug fox holes to sleep in and cover ourselves with mud to keep the mosquitoes from biting us.

In this campaign there was a lack of supplies, food, clothing and ammunition. The climate was very hot and humid, with rain practically every day. The boots that we were given were made of rubber on the bottom and canvas on top. They never let our feet dry off and I, and most of the others, had what we called "jungle rot" on our feet and ankles. We had very bad infections on our feet, and it took years after the war ended for me to get my feet back to normal again.

The campaign in the Admiralties included seven beachheads, and I was in three: Los Negros, Manus Island and Mekerage Peninsula. These were three of the fiercest battles of the Admiralty Campaign. Losses to the Japanese in these battles were about 60 Japanese to one American.

When the troops landed at a new beachhead, our landing crafts could not go all the way to shore. A ramp would go down and we had to run to shore. Sometimes we would be running when the tide was in and we would drop down into water over our heads. We had to keep running with our guns held high over our heads to keep them dry.

After the Admiralty Campaign, the 1st Calvary embarked for the Philippine Islands. We landed on Leyte on October 20, 1944. On White Beach the 1st Calvary captured Tacloban, the capitol of Leyte, the day after landing. Leyte and Samar Island were also the scene of fierce fighting. The battle through the mountains separating Leyte and Ormoc Valleys has been described as the outstanding achievement of this campaign.

I was the squad leader of a platoon of 30 men. While on patrol December 19, 1944, we came over a hill and were met by Japanese fire. Three men were killed and four wounded immediately. At that time, we dug in and a runner went for artillery help. No help came so another man went out. Still no help had arrived by mid afternoon. At that time, I passed command to the 1st Squad Leader and went for help. As I was going through the valley and up the next hill, I was shot by an enemy sniper. The bullet hit me in the back, in the shoulder. I also found the first two men, who had been killed by the sniper. I continued on, but did not get to help until the next morning. The troops used their mortar fire to bring our men back.

I was taken to a first aid station and then to the 132nd General Hospital, Base H on the island of Biak in the Dutch East Indies. A period of five days passed before I received proper medical attention and serious infection had set into the wound. After several months of hospitalization and recuperation, I returned to my outfit in Luzon.

I had been transferred to a service group to drive a truck. On my third trip out with a load of ammunition, I hit a land mine and the truck was demolished, but fortunately, I was not injured. I was then issued a new truck and assigned to hauling rations to the troops in the field.

After Japan surrendered, we were transferred to Japan. The First Division was the first to arrive in Tokyo for the U.S. occupation. After five weeks in Japan, I was released from duty. I should've gone home earlier, but my records had been lost and I couldn't go anywhere until they were found. There were welcoming parties for some of the GIs, but when I arrived in Seattle, our group was given a glass of warm milk, stale sweet rolls and nobody to greet us.

Military Policeman

Jim Arentz grew up across the street from Grafton High School, and it was six months after his 1968 graduation when he decided to volunteer for the service. He left his job at Lake Central Leather and reported for duty with Uncle Sam.

I'd always thought about going in the service. My dad had served in the Navy for six years during World War II. I was not interested in going in the Navy for six years; the Marines would probably be four years. I wanted to go in so I volunteered for the draft, which was two years active duty, two years reserves and two years inactive duty, for a total of six years. The Vietnam War was going on and I knew what I was getting into - my parents weren't happy because I was the only son of eight children.

I was sworn in on December 23, right before Christmas, though I knew I wouldn't have to report for duty until January 3, 1969. We flew down to Ft. Campbell, Ky., and that was when I first learned the concept of "hurry up and wait." I contracted pneumonia when I was in basic and ended up in the hospital. I found out that if you were out for so many days, you had to start over. The day before that would happen, when they took my temperature, I made absolutely sure my temperature had "gone down."

Most of the fellas I went through basic training with ended up going to Ft. Polk for advanced training and then on to Vietnam. I didn't though. I went to Ft. Gordon, Georgia for MP training.

I received my orders when I was back home on leave in Wisconsin. They were for Sandia Base, New Mexico. I remember you would drive through Albuquerque and all of a sudden, you'd be at the base.

When I got there, it turned out that we had three MP Divisions on base: Traffic, enforcement, and security. Traffic meant that you would stand on a box in a middle of an intersection and direct traffic with your hands, just like what you see in the movies. Enforcement was like being a civilian police officer. I ended up in security.

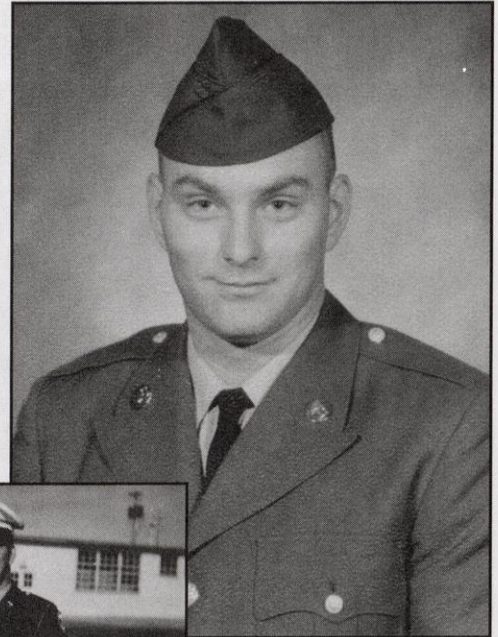
Our base was highly secretive. During World War II, a lot of the A-Bomb development occurred at our base. I needed to have top-secret clearance, so they sent people up to Grafton to do interviews about me. They interviewed Mrs. Steinert, our neighbors, the Bloedorns, and two or three other people. They were trying to establish my credibility and when I came home on leave, people said to me, "What did YOU do?" I must have been okay because I received my top-secret clearance and I got my own squad and became a DASA (Defense Atomic Support Agency) MP.

I lucked out. I ended up being on patrol instead of having to pull "post," which was one man alone in a single guard shack out in the boonies. My job was to go out and check the guys on post - I would go out every hour and make sure they were okay (and awake).

I also was responsible for responding to alarms. We had a lot of the windows taped on base. Lots of things could set them off - opening a window, a bird hitting the window, even vibrations. You didn't need to break the tape to set the alarm. Sometimes when the tape would get too old it would crack and set the alarm off, too, so I'd take a repair kit with me. I'd find out where the alarm was going off and check it out. I never had an actual intrusion, though I had to approach with my .45 drawn.

Once we did have an incident when I was on day shift. The Bank of New Mexico was on base and tellers were just getting there and getting ready for the day. At that time, the last bill in their drawer was somehow wired and it would set off an alarm if they pulled it out. One of the tellers must've forgotten because she pulled her bill out. We sent all our squads down there and we had the bank surrounded. We came through the front door with our weapons drawn. The bank teller was just shaking - she knew what she'd done - and I felt quite bad for her.

At the end of our tour of duty, we were offered training at the police academy in Washington, D.C. to return to my roots in Grafton.



Jim served with the U.S. Army from December 1968 until December 9, 1970. (left) Here he is as an MP at Sandia Base in New Mexico.

Charles Asherman

As told to Mark Jaeger

Served in the Battle of the Bulge

Charles Asherman grew up in Chicago and had just started the foundation for his career in engineering at Chicago Junior College when he was drafted into the Army in March 1943. After basic training he found himself back in the classroom studying pre-engineering, courtesy of the Army this time at Penn State University. That set the stage for his tour of duty in Europe. He served from March 1943 to December 1945.

I started with the 65th Infantry Division in Camp Shelby, Miss. I was inducted as a radio operator and was then transferred to serve on a reconnaissance unit with the 87th Infantry Division. I didn't even know how to spell reconnaissance, but I was assigned to the unit. The nickname of our unit was the Golden Acorns, and the insignia patch had this acorn on it. It was the ugliest looking thing. We just called ourselves The Nuts. I was all boxing gloves when it came to being a radio operator, but I still remember Morse code. We sent messages straight at the time, nothing was scrambled.



Charles served as a radio operator with the Golden Acorns - aka "The Nuts" - during World War II.

We landed in north France in September 1944. We went in as a total combat unit, although we had a lot to learn. There was a lot of on-the-job training, if you know what I mean. The job of the recon unit was to find the enemy, so we were often in front of the front lines. We were a mobile unit rather than an infantry unit. Often we would find the enemy at the same time they would find us. You developed an intuition that tells you when not to fire, when you don't want to stir up a hornets' nest.

We started in Metz, an old town surrounded by five forts. From there we were sent directly to Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge, although we didn't know it. We thought we were going to get a chance to recuperate, but all of a sudden we found ourselves in combat. There was a lot of confusion and we didn't even have time for our Christmas dinner.

It was hard to find the line of demarcation between the sides. One time we were out on patrol and we came across one of our artillery units with no one else around. It was very confusing. Sometimes the only way to tell what was really going on was to wait and read about it in *Stars and Stripes*.

I remember it was the coldest weather I had ever experienced. My feet were always cold, and trench foot was running rampant. I would look enviously at the geese we would see on the farms, because I knew at least they were enjoying the wet weather. While in Belgium, we were taken in by a group of nuns who hid us from a German patrol. We hid under some straw in a basement, and after the Germans left the nuns came and served us Belgian waffles. God, they were good!

My unit moved east through Luxembourg, when I got burned by a piece of flying shrapnel. I never ended up getting a Purple Heart, however, because I was treated for pneumonia at the same time and that was all they put down on my record. I did receive the Bronze Star for valor, but I don't really know why they gave it to me. I wasn't going to turn it down.

Eventually, I rejoined the 87th on the Siegfried Line, which was lined with pill boxes and underground rail lines the Germans used to transport troops and supplies. By the time we arrived, it was sort of a mop-up operation for our unit, preventive maintenance you might say. We kept heading east and got to Koblenz, the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle rivers. It was springtime, and I remember thinking it was the first time I saw anything that looked beautiful, like there wasn't a war at all.

After we crossed the Rhine, we kept heading east. When we got to the Czech border a month before the war with Germany ended. We were told we weren't allowed to go any farther. I never did see any Russian soldiers, but when the armistice was signed the German soldiers came out from all over to surrender to us. Our officers wondered what they were going to do with them all. My unit was assigned to occupy the town of Plaussen. Because I took four years of German in high school, I was asked to listen to conversations between the prisoners, although I couldn't pick up much of what they were saying.

Eventually, we pulled back to northern France and in June of 1945 we were sent back to the States. My division was decommissioned and I ended with duty at Fort Bragg, N.C. as one of the fierce warriors of the accounting department. After I was discharged, I returned to study metallurgical engineering at the University of Illinois.

Charles Asherman died on July 17, 2005.

Leonard Augustin

As told to Mark Jaeger

One of Four Brothers to Serve during World War II

Port Washington native Leonard Augustin saw World War II as an opportunity to see the world, but that dream had to be put temporarily on hold because he already had three brothers fighting overseas. The War Department's policy was not to have more than three brothers in battle at the same time, a concept the public became familiar with through the Tom Hanks film, "Saving Private Ryan." Eventually, Augustin got his chance serving with the Air Force in India, although he never fired a gun in battle.

I was born and raised in Port Washington in the 1920s, graduating from Port Washington High School. I had been working as a draftsman with Modern Equipment in Port when I joined the Air Force in 1943.

The thing that sticks most in my mind from basic training was that when they said sit, they meant right now, not when you got around to it. They also saw to it that I got in pretty good shape. I didn't have much of an opinion on the war at the time, but I did think Hitler should have been stopped sooner.

It didn't really make any difference to me where I would go after I joined the service. I just wanted to experience a part of the world that was extremely different from where I grew up, so I would have something to talk about with the other guys.

After training at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss., I was transferred to Bartow Air Force Base in Florida. I was a corporal and spent most of that time making maps of the bases so all of the new pilots could find their way around.

I came up for reassignment overseas three or four times, but I was always scrubbed because my family already had three boys overseas. My oldest brother, Joseph, was in North Africa, and my brothers Fred and Norbert were in Europe. They both fought in the Battle of the Bulge. My youngest brother, Rueben, was stationed stateside.

When Joseph's tour of duty ended, I got my chance and was shipped to India. We were on the boat leaving the harbor in New York City when we received word that Hitler gave up. Germany had surrendered.

Then we crossed through the Suez Canal into India. In India, my first job was to help demolish old planes. Someone found out I could type, so I was moved into headquarters as a statistical clerk, collecting statistics for reports.

I was stationed 100 miles northwest of Calcutta, so I got around a little. I went to Calcutta a couple of times and took a flight to see the Taj Mahal once. India is a very poor country, so it was very much a surprise to see what could be accomplished when the people put so much work and effort into that building. I guess I got my wish, because India was certainly different from back home.

I had friends stationed in China, and they would talk about how the locals would scramble away in fear whenever our guys started up a Caterpillar or some other heavy equipment to clean up a site.

I kept in touch with my parents, George and Ann, and my two sisters. I would write home about two times a week. We had to make sure they had something to talk about, and if we wrote to one of them, everyone else would see the letter. I also made a point of writing to my brothers during the war, keeping track of them by using APOs. They made a point of keeping in touch with me, too, especially when I was stateside and could get things they couldn't get. One time I remember I sent them each a box of cigars.

While I was in India, Japan surrendered. Everyone was very excited, because it meant we would be going home soon and getting back to our lives. I don't remember there being any great celebration when we finally came home, no ticker tape parade or anything, because we were all getting back at the same time.

Despite being all over the place, the odd thing is all of us brothers returned home safe and sound, not even a scratch. Someone was certainly watching out for us. After the war, none of my brothers really wanted to talk much about what they went through. That seemed to be true for almost everyone who had been in fighting. They felt if you hadn't been through war, you would never understand what it was like.

I never gave any thought to staying in the military full time. I knew I wanted to stay in drafting and engineering, so I went back to Port Washington and ended up working for Modern Equipment for 45 years. Working at one place for so long is unheard of these days, I know.



Corporal Leonard Augustin used his drafting skills to design this Christmas card to share with family and friends while in the Air Force in 1943.

Spent 32 Years in the Army Reserves

Grafton resident Frank Balistreri served with the U.S. Army Reserves from February 1961 until February 1993. He grew up on Milwaukee's East side, and had been dating a neighborhood Italian girl when things started to get serious enough to talk about marriage.

I said, "That's fine, but there's always military duty." At that time in 1960, you could still be eligible for the draft and I decided I was going to beat it and enlist in the Army Reserves.

I went on active duty June 2, 1961, which was my basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo. Now I somewhat laugh when I think about it - we were a bunch of people who knew absolutely nothing about the military, what it took to stand up straight and talk and walk, and we were being lead by people who knew just a little bit more than we did. For example, one of the top NCOs was a Southern gentlemen - a term I use dearly - he loved to chew tobacco. His favorite toy was to call out the barracks number, to say, "Come to your roster line with [such-and-such item], and [such-and-such item]..." He'd do this five or six times until you caught on. But what really, really made me laugh was that I got a close glimpse of the microphone he was using and it was brown from the tobacco juice. Ugh, man!

"I found that what I had learned in the military also helped me in my civilian job - I learned responsibility and how to be assertive..."

My entire company was full of "six monthers" - we were either fellow Reservists or National Guard people and our platoon sergeant hated all of us. He called us every name in the book and then proceeded to make up one or two. But we got the last laugh on him because every time test time came around, we generally averaged 95 or better on the tests. We had a CPA, a post-grad medical student, a pre-law student and a bunch of construction guys - you could tell that most of us were intelligent or smart enough not to chew tobacco.

I trained for eight weeks in basic infantry, a MOS of 111. My next set of orders took me to a supply school at Ft. Leonard Wood. I spent six weeks there and the final portion of my training was on-the-job training at a central issue point at brigade level. I learned how to barter and trade to get what I needed.

I also worked as a mail courier. I remember around that time my mother sent me a box of homemade Italian cookies. My supervisor's supervisor and the brigade commander both came to the central issue point - the commander had a quart of milk and glasses. Both of them knew what was in the package - we sat there for about 20 minutes eating cookies and drinking milk.

When I finished active duty, I returned home. My mother cooked me the wonderful Italian food that I hadn't had in quite a while. I also reported back to the Reserve Center and handed them all my paperwork. My commander gave me a pep talk - he said now that you're back from active duty and went through this school, you probably have all the latest knowledge on the material. I had taken a lot of notes, which was good because you're going to be an instructor when we go back down to the school you just came from.

I did have a civilian job while I was in the Reserves. I worked at the Boston Store warehouse and later at Badger Meter. I found that what I had learned in the military also helped me in my civilian job - I learned responsibility and how to be assertive. I also did marry that Italian girl in 1963. We were married for 11 years, and from that point I went from a Private First Class to a Sergeant First Class.

I found that with more rank, the more responsibility you had and the Reserves almost became a full-time job. You had to use some of your private time to take care of things. We always had monthly meetings and two weeks during the summer. Eventually I had a primary MOS 76Y when I was sent to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade for the 84th Division and I was also receiving training for a secondary MOS 13 Bravo, which was an artillery instructor. I really became knowledgeable in the M-155 Howitzer Self Propelled and became an instructor. Shortly after that, I became a training NCO and then a first sergeant, which opened up a whole new door to responsibilities. Eventually, I ended up being at the maximum time that you could be as an E-8. When you reach that, you either need to find another home or advance to the next rank. If you can't do that, you're out. I had a feeling at that point, I was a short timer. And I was right.

I spent a total of 32 years in the Reserves. I am proud of my tour of duty in the military, such as it was. I have memories that will live forever. Names and faces sort of fade over time, but you still remember the stories. I have a million memories. I have a friend who is now a major and when I first met him, he was an ROTC cadet. We still keep in touch. I have many friendships like that from my time in the military.

Navy Clerk on the U.S.S. Helena

Grafton's Edward Barlow served with the Navy from June 25, 1948 until May 29, 1952. He graduated from his Baltimore high school in 1948, after the end of World War II.

There was nothing unusual about my induction except that I was asked if I would do an interview for someone because they wanted to do an induction/trainee interview for one of the radio stations. Whether or not that was ever played, I don't know. I left.

I was sent to Great Lakes, Ill., which was the first time I had really ever been out of Baltimore, except for the few times I'd gone to Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. In my class at Great Lakes we ended up having two squads because we were so big and we only trained for 10 or 11 weeks. We had the guys who could march well and they were the "drill squad." The guys who couldn't march very well were called the "goon platoon." That was my squad.

I wanted to be what we then called a "radioman" because radios were very popular in the 1940s. I thought it would entail fixing radios, but what "radio" meant in the Navy was that you were a communications person. You had to learn things like Morse Code. That made me a little wary, so I transferred into clerical school, which was just fine with me. I knew how to type.

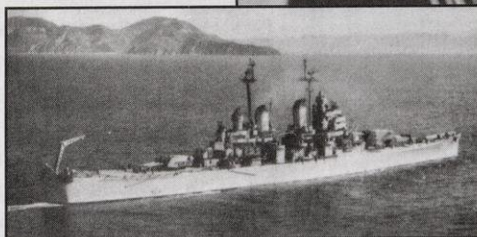
I was assigned to the Navy cruiser U.S.S. Helena in California. That summer when I arrived, we took a bunch of Reservists and ROTC on a six-week cruise up to Seattle and down to Panama. The Canal is just north of the equator, so they took the Helena down there. The Navy has a ceremony that recognizes that you are no longer a "polliwog." Once you crossed the equator, you become a member of the Ancient Order of the Deep.

In 1959, we went over to Japan and the Philippines, which also included a few-month tour to Manila. We cruised to a lot of different ports and islands because we were occupational forces and making our presence known.

We did get out to Nagasaki, which was where we had dropped the bomb a few years earlier. We also went to Nagoria, which was the inspiration for the opera, *Madame Butterfly*. I also went horseback riding in the snow.

I once pulled a prank on a fellow shipmate. We were waiting in the chow line and I told him he had mail buoy watch. We received mail from home from planes that would drop buoys in the water and we would have to fish them out. After he went on watch, I had the master of arms put him under arrest because he had "missed" the mail buoy. We told him that he was very fortunate because there was a guy on the fantail who had picked up the mail, but the captain would be very upset because he almost missed some very important mail - letters from his wife. After they put him on report, they told him it was all a prank. He didn't talk to me for a few days after that. Pranks were quite common, particularly those played on new recruits. Deckhands would get sent down to the engine rooms for a bucket of steam; others would be sent to the electric shop for a bucket of kilowatts.

I remember we also opened our ship on Armed Forces Day in 1950. Some Army friends of ours from Tokyo came to visit. We were complaining to them that it was going to take 22 days to get back to the States. We had been overseas for 10 months and we would still be playing war games on the way home. When they heard us complaining, they said we should be "very happy we were going home." After we got back to the States and I went home on leave, I was riding in a car with my friends from home and we heard them talking about Korea on the radio. I returned home and found a telegram telling me to report back to the ship. We ended up going back and running up and down the China Coast for 30 days because we were expecting the Chinese to invade Formosa (now Taipei). We then returned to Japan in August and until November we ran up and down the Korean coast. The North Koreans were pushing the South Korean and American armies to the southern part of the peninsula. The American forces were preparing for war.



Ed Barlow served as a clerk on the U.S.S. Helena CA-75. He spent much of his time in the Far East.

Ruben Baumann

Clerk for the 117th Transport Co. during the Korean Era

It's fairly easy for a single, young soldier to assimilate into military life, but not so easy when you're a newlywed. After growing up and going to school together in Port Washington, newlyweds Ruben and Doris Baumann had to deal with an unexpected relative: Uncle Sam.

When I was drafted into the Army, it was kind of a surprise because I had enlisted in the Naval Reserves when I was a junior in high school. I thought if I had to go in, I'd be going in the Navy. Quite a few of us in my class did it.



Ruben served as a clerk at Ft. Eustis for his entire tour of duty in the Army.

I never had to go for drills or anything like that; I was just a member of the Naval Reserve.

When I got my draft notice, I checked with the draft board. They weren't aware of it, but they did say that because of it, I could join any military branch. I picked the Army because their prescribed time was two years, less than the Navy was requiring at the time. I did it because we'd just gotten married, and it was the shortest amount of time offered to the draftees.

I was inducted during Holy Week 1951 and arrived at Ft. Eustis on Holy Saturday. I don't remember if I went to mass that night, but I'm sure I went on Easter Sunday. Ft. Eustis just started offering basic training at that point, and we trained with carbines until the last two weeks of training, when we were finally issued M1 rifles. They were so worn out they must've been among the first issued during World War II!

I had been assigned to a transportation unit, and we had two choices: cargo checking or stevedore. I had just finished schooling when a sergeant came in and asked if anyone could type. Even though you're never supposed to volunteer for anything, I raised my hand. I had two years of typing in Catholic school, and it paid off because I was assigned to be a clerk-typist in personnel.

It helped me to be in personnel because part of my job was to pick the guys with certain MOSs to go to Korea. A lot of them ended up on the front lines. I also found out through my work in personnel that my Naval Reserves time counted, and I was able to qualify for higher pay.

At one point, our battalion received notice that it was going to be going on maneuvers in Iceland. Just before we were about to ship out, I was called out of ranks - it scared the bejesus out of me - and the company commander asked if I'd like to stay behind and be the company clerk. It took me about 10 seconds to decide - my wife was pregnant at the time and we were living off post. By becoming company clerk, I was able to stay with her.

My job was routine: morning reports, reports for the battalion and letters. I would work regular shifts and go home at night. We were a "holdback" company, and anyone who had emergency leave would come through our company. While I don't know of anyone who came back from Iceland, but we did have a lot of returning soldiers from the first occupation of Japan, and they became the cadre for our unit. About 90 percent of them had Japanese wives.

After I served my duty, I was ready to return to Wisconsin. I liked home. I saw a lot of guys get orders to move across the country. I hated - and still hate - moving and I didn't want that kind of life, particularly since we had a family. I think serving in the military made me more patriotic, probably more patriotic than I would've been had I stayed home.

We came home and had a total of seven boys and two girls - no twins. One of my sons, Jim, retired from the Air Force as a Lieutenant Colonel. Our other son, Jeff, served 10 years in the Air Force. All three of us belong to the Land-Thiel Legion Post #470 in Saukville.



Ruben was armed with a rifle ... and a typewriter.

Fred Beck

Took Part in the D-Day Invasion

When Fred Beck was voluntarily inducted into the Army in 1943, he didn't realize just how long it would be until he came home: 34 months and two days. The Port Washington soldier wouldn't come home until he took part in D-Day and marched across Europe before the war ended.

I went into the Army in January 1943, which was before Congress voted that you couldn't send anyone overseas after training without a furlough home. When you're 18, you're pretty naive. I went over to Europe with guys who never saw their homes again. Because of that, instead of coming home after completing basic training at Fort Hood, I was sent to New York where 16,000 of us boarded the Queen Elizabeth for transport to Scotland.

It took us five nights and four days, and I later found out that we set a record for the number of troops transported in one voyage. My job was to man a 50-caliber gun on deck, and I would work four on and have eight off. I don't know what I would've done had I needed to shoot it because I was so sick. I had seasickness and I didn't like the food they served us - it was a British ship and we had things like marmalade.

After we arrived in Scotland, we took a trip through England to a replacement depot in Litchfield. The first night we were there we experienced our first air raid. We ended up training at Plymouth, England.

My job was a battery computer for fire direction control. I served in the 29th Division's 111th Field Artillery, Headquarters Battery, Battalion Headquarters, Fire Direction Center. Our team included a horizontal control operator, a vertical control operator, three battery computers and our captain. I worked a 12 on and 12 off schedule. During our hours off, we'd sleep, shower and later they took us on hikes to keep us from getting soft. When I went in, I weighed 130 pounds, and by October 1943 I was up to 143 pounds.

We started training for what would become D-Day in late 1943, early 1944. We used DUKWs, but we went out on the English Channel in LSTs, and then back the DUKWs off the LSTs into the water. We had 12 howitzers in each battalion and 13 DUKWs. Each DUKW had 14 men and 40 rounds. During training, I actually rode in a DUKW with my gun battery, but at the last minute, they decided I should be in the Headquarters DUKW. I later found out that the guy who took my place was machine gunned to death.

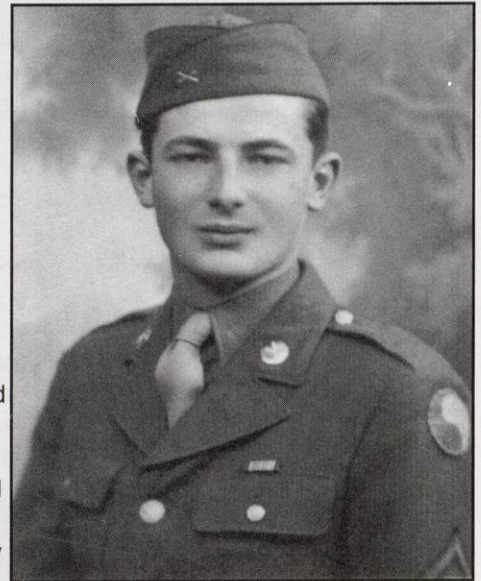
The morning of June 6, 1944, we were out in the Channel by 0330. It was dark, and while we couldn't see anything, we could hear other boats in the water. Our rendezvous area was between 400 and 800 yards from the LSTs. We started backing off the LSTs and some backed right straight down. We backed off our LST and after about 1/2 hour of circling we were hit by a huge wave and capsized. I couldn't swim, but we all wore belts with compressed air capsules. I pressed on my capsules and popped right up. I was probably in the water about a half hour before I was picked up by a Navy or Coast Guard boat, I don't remember. Let me tell you, the English Channel in early June is quite cold.

I was put to bed and I slept until mid afternoon. I was fed, and they issued me green Navy coveralls, an ill-fitting helmet and a 45-caliber pistol. We spent the night aboard a rhino ferry, which was moored some miles off of the shore. A rhino ferry is a barge with air-tight compartments. We were fairly safe. We were near the USS Arkansas, and their 14-inch guns went off all night over us. We could see the projectiles and feel the heat. At that point, I knew that something big was going on, but I don't think I realized how big.

We finally made it ashore at about 10:30 a.m. on June 7 at the Vierville Draw. I was shocked: There were so many bodies and parts of bodies still floating around. We did a little guard duty, but mostly we spent time in our fox holes. We'd only been able to get two of our 12 guns on the beach, and we had to wait for replacements before we could move. Those guns arrived on June 12, and we occupied a position behind the infantry starting on June 13.

We worked our way through France, then back and forth between Holland and Germany. We stopped 4,000 to 5,000 yards from the Elbe River, but I never saw the Russians. When the war ended, we went to mass in a German church. We carried our guns, and the Germans were afraid of us.

My brother, Clarence Beck, also spent 36 months in the Navy during World War II. While we were gone, my mother walked to St. Mary's every day from Oakland Avenue for mass. Her praying must've done a lot, because we both came home safely when the war was over.



Above: This picture was taken while Fred was stationed in England. Note the 29th Division shoulder patch - the same insignia worn by "Private Ryan."

Jack Becker

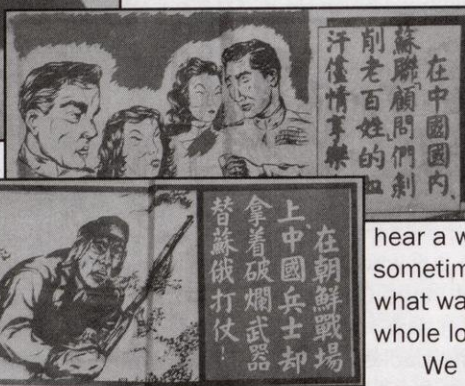
Gun Section Chief during the Korean War

Port Washington's Jack Becker was working at Bernie's Fine Meats while he awaited his draft notice. With that invitation from Uncle Sam, he knew it was likely he would end up in one of two places: Europe or Korea. He reported for duty with about 13 or 14 other draftees from Ozaukee County in February 1952.

After basic training, I was actually supposed to stay at Ft. Sill, Okla., which was where I completed my training. I was supposed to be a cadre trainer, but I turned it down. I knew I couldn't keep doing the same thing every 16 weeks. They gave me that position because I excelled during basic training: I knew my right foot from my left foot. I'd also been battalion trainee of the week. When I turned down the job, they said, "Now, you're going to Korea."



(above) Jack Becker in front of his bunker in Korea. (right) Samples of propaganda the American troops dropped in Korea while he was there.



They sent me out to Ft. Roberts, Calif., and then we took a troop ship to Camp Drake, Japan. We spent about two weeks there before we went on to Inchon in September 1952. I received a temporary assignment with the 101st Airborne, but was eventually reassigned to the 7th Infantry Division. At that time, there was a lot of heavy fighting going on; they were trying to establish where the Demilitarized Zone would be.

At that point, my job also changed. I was initially supposed to be in artillery survey, which meant that I would have laid the guns into position, but I was reassigned to a gun section and eventually became a gun section chief. As chief, I would get our direction via phone. The members of my crew would then position the gun to the correct elevation, load it and fire it. Based on the elevations we sometimes used, sometimes it only seemed like we were firing just over the hill ahead of us. Normally we were supposed to have 12 guys on a crew, but I ended up with only six. I also had one ROK soldier as part of my crew; he was really the only Korean I'd met.

We moved about every three to four weeks; we were on "marching orders." Sometimes we moved forward and sometimes we moved backward. Often, we really didn't know where we were. We also didn't hear a whole lot about the overall progress, though sometimes we'd get the newspaper and we'd find out what was going on at Panmunjom, which was often a whole lot of nothing.

We ended up on Triangle Hill [Becker lost 9 of his 12 crew members there], T-Bone Hill and Pork Chop Hill. I was a butcher and then I ended up on those hills, which was interesting. We spent three days and two nights at Triangle Hill and I lost my hearing at that point for awhile from the shelling. I ended up earning three Bronze Stars, one for each hill and I became a Staff Sergeant.

We normally lived in squad tents. We built bunkers out of sandbags and I lived in a bunker for awhile. Our bunker received a direct hit and it was demolished, but thankfully, I don't remember anyone being in there at the time. In terms of food, we ate whatever they gave us, which was typically cooked in a field kitchen. Sometimes I'd get a package from home. It usually had cookies and sausage - from Bernie's - in it. Korean winters were cold, cold, colder and then spring was just rain, rain, rain. I did get R&R - I went to Japan.

I remember after I'd been there quite a while, I saw Jimmy Poull pull up on the back of a "deuceandahalf." We weren't really friends back home - our families were, though - but we were very glad to see each other. It was quite a surprise. At that point, I was a combat veteran and he was just arriving. After we both safely returned home to Port Washington, we became - and still are - buddies.

I left Korea in September 1953. I arrived back in the States via a troop ship, and we landed at Camp Carson. Rhonda Fleming was there and she kissed everybody coming off the ship - her lips were hanging pretty low by the time I got off. I took a train home for leave, but had to return to Camp Carson to be discharged.

I remember my parents were going to church when I returned home permanently. That Sunday, the priest at St. Mary's said the Korean War was over because I was in church.

Margaret Behnke

As told to Vicki Schanen

Navy Wave during World War II

Margaret Behnke was born in Hillsboro, N.D., - "way out in the sticks" as she describes it. She attended school in a one-room schoolhouse through 8th grade and attended one year of high school before going to work as a housekeeper.

When I was in my late 20s, a friend of mine, Eleanore, and I had spent a lot of our free time together. We both started looking into the service at the same time. I went into the Navy so I could get away from someone always telling me what to do. I didn't like the idea of, "It's time to clean the house." I had enough of that. But the military had just as many rules.

The other branches of the military were open to women, but no women could go overseas. We had to stay within the continental United States. I took the entrance tests in Fargo, and at the time they told me that I had the highest ratings that ever came through the Fargo office.

I did basic training at Hunter College in New York and I think I covered most of New York on foot. The Navy had rented Hunter College at that time and that is where the women trained.

I don't think Eleanor had as high of scores as I did. She ended up in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. I ended up near Washington, D.C. and the Patuxent Naval Air Station. I wasn't supposed to be there; our files were lost "in the drink" in Bethesda, Maryland. I was supposed to be sent to storekeeper's school.

Patuxent was a powder-testing place, an ammunition base. Unfortunately, I was allergic to gunpowder and I was supposed to be a powder tester. They realized they had made a mistake about three months after I had been to Patuxent Naval Air Station. I ended up in Bethesda at the Naval Hospital. I never had the faintest idea that I had that allergy.

They gave us three choices - you made your choices, but you could be pretty sure that you wouldn't get any of them - and my three choices were the Red Cross/medical, storekeeping and mail directory.

Washington, D.C., wasn't very beautiful at all. It was wet and soggy, and if you stepped in a puddle you would sink up to your knees. I was there in September and it was very, very wet. But I was very adaptable to my new surroundings. I made lots of friends in the 1 1/2 years I was stationed out there, but I've also outlasted quite a few. In fact, at 90, I think I've outlived everybody that I served with in the Navy.

After I got out of the hospital I worked in the barracks and in the Officers' Mess at Patuxent. I would have to start setting up the mess at 6 a.m. The officers got "a little special": salt and pepper shakers, sugar bowls and cream pitchers in the middle of the table. The enlisted men had to go through the line to get those things.

I did help in the kitchen. There were big potato peelers and you could put 300 pounds of potatoes in them at one time. That served half a meal - we'd serve 1,200 people at the Officers' Mess three times a day. A lot of the cooking was done under steam pressure, too. I learned a lot, I learned how to judge a lot. I learned how far things would go and when I would have to substitute something.

The chief did all the ordering and sometimes we could make suggestions, but he generally made all the decisions. He was a very sociable man and easy to get along with, but we had to take responsibility for our actions and be honest with him. He was good to me, but he wasn't good to everybody. Though, I did get along with everyone when I was in the Navy.

My days would end at about 10 p.m. at night, though I did have time for fun. We would go down to the Chesapeake Bay. A bunch of mess - men and women - used to go together. There were two civilian families that I got real well acquainted with, and I met them through church. They took real good care of us kids. One of the families had lived in Indianhead, Maryland, their whole life and they had two little children. The other family had come up from the South. I remember they used to call me "Miss Margaret" as a sign of respect. It could never be anything else.

We all returned to North Dakota at about the same time. I went back to housekeeping, though I did it when I darn well pleased.



Margaret served with the U.S. Navy from July 1944 until November 7, 1945.

Frank Bley

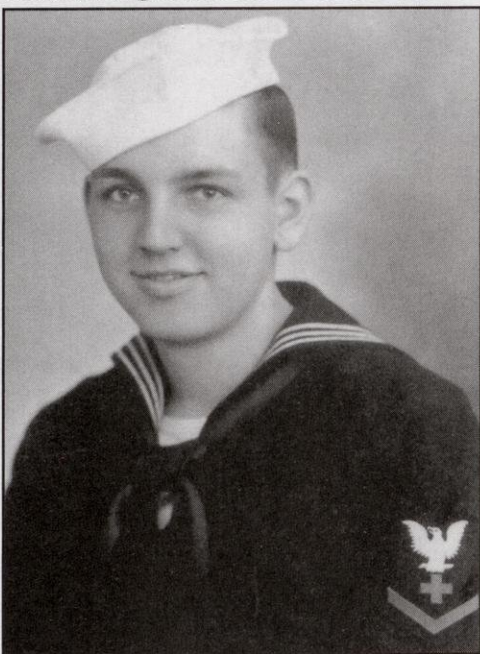
Naval Corpsman

Being drafted into the Navy was a good thing. Being told to report to Great Lakes in Illinois on 21 December 1943 wasn't a good thing. It turned out to be my first Christmas away from home.

It was a good winter, not too much snow. It was easy to keep your shoes looking good. Boot camp went by very quickly. The next six weeks were spent at the Hospital Corp School in Bainbridge, Md. This too was enjoyable and went by quickly.

I was then transferred to the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, Va. and I went to work on a surgical ward for about two months. I spent a lot of time working with the nurses on the ward. They were good teachers and taught me more than I learned in school.

After the two months on the surgical ward I was transferred to Neuro Psychiatry school for 16 weeks. During this time I went to school a couple of hours a day with Dr. Holman as our teacher. The balance of the day we worked with a trained corpsman and his patients. After we were done with school we were given a group of combat fatigue patients to help. First we would work them for a couple of hours. Work was like unloading a food barge onto a truck and then take it to the Commissary and unload the truck or whatever there was for us to do.



Belgium native Frank Bley served his time stateside at the Portsmouth Naval Hospital.

After a work period we would begin the second part of our day at the Rehabilitation Building where the patients would do activities to help in their rehabilitation. They did projects in metalworking, sewing, leathercraft and art.

The third part of the day was sports for a couple of hours, which also helped in our patients' rehabilitation. We had fast pitch softball, flag football or other activities that would be helpful. After a couple of months of this, most patients went back to full duty.

We enjoyed the work in the Rehabilitation Building and in the sports activities. A portion of our time was spent assisting the patients with the activities, but we also had the opportunity to play along.

For my last year, I was transferred to work on Ward 5, a locked ward. There were eight of us corpsmen on each shift; three corpsmen on the front half of the ward and five corpsmen on the back half of the ward. The front half of the ward was where the patients were close to being sent back to duty or to another ward to cure different problems, or to a ward without locks.

The patients in the back half of the ward were patients with major problems such as manic depression or schizophrenia. We also had three locked cells in the ward for patients who were more violent or

who were suicidal. We treated each patient as prescribed by the doctor. At times some of the treatments were very unusual, but we did as we were told. Most of the patients were heavily medicated; some were given Paraldehyde as part of their treatment. The alcoholics really liked that, but the next morning was always pretty difficult for them. Other patients would be wrapped in an "ice pack" for three hours; still others would have their spines sprayed with two hoses, one with very warm water, one with cold water.

We also had patients who were prisoners of the Navy, but had an injury or sickness that had to be treated. When patients got too violent or needed long-term care the doctors would transfer them to Bethesda Naval Hospital near Washington, D.C. Our patients came right off of the boats; we also received Marines off the battlefield as World War II was going on.

A more pleasant treatment happened about once a month. The better patients were bussed out to the Planters Peanut Clubhouse for a dance. The Portsmouth USO furnished young ladies for the dance and we corpsmen had to go along as chaperones. The base band furnished the music. Overall, we were treated very well by the people of Portsmouth. We would have dinners in their homes or receive tickets to concerts. Most of that was also set up by the U.S.O.

After being discharged from the Navy I came home and did odd jobs until school started. I went to the University of Wisconsin on the G.I. Bill and graduated four years later. I found a job in Milwaukee after graduation at an electrotyping company, and ended up working for the same people for 40 years. I also joined Belgium Legion Post 412 after I graduated from college and became employed. I have been a member for 47 years, though I now live in Brookfield.

Field Wireman during the Korean War

Port Washington native William Bley served with the U.S. Army from August 1952 until May 1954. Bill attended St. Mary's School and Port Washington High School, graduating in 1947. He was working at Bolens as a draftsman in the Engineering Department when he was drafted.

All six of the boys in my family went in the service: Bob, Don and Allan were in World War II. I went in during the Korean War, and so did my brother, Fred. He was coming into Korea when I was leaving. My brother, Gary, served in the Air Corps and was in Alaska for three years. My mother was writing letters to all of us for 20 years!

I knew my draft notice was coming - I had gotten a letter saying that I had to go for a physical in Chicago and then they just put me in the Army.

I went to Camp Chaffee, Ark., for basic training from August until November 1952. I had combat training, took some tests and ended up getting training in field wiring.

I sat at Camp Stoneman, Calif., over Christmas that year and that was where they told us we were going to Korea. We arrived in Pusan, and I remember it was nice and warm, even though it was January. We went on a troop train up to the front. It had no windows because they'd all been shot out. We'd go through the villages and the Koreans were begging for food. We'd throw a candy bar out the window and about 20 kids would jump on it. They were all pretty hungry.

When I got up to the Chorwon Sector it was 40 below zero, which was quite a switch. Once we got up to the front, they dispersed all the people. I was assigned to the 25th Division Signal Corps and I eventually moved a little further back.

We slept in tents with sleeping bags and cots. We also had oil stoves, but we had to turn them off at night because they were a fire risk. We had trouble with the local Koreans, too. They'd come in and steal stuff. One night I had my little radio on in the tent and all of a sudden I heard - *zip!* - and there was a knife coming through the tent. I hollered, "There's a guy trying to get in here!" He could see my radio. I was going to grab him but I couldn't grab anything but his knife. The guard saw him, though. I saw clippers in the Korean's back pocket.

One day, I saw Al Lanser [from Port Washington], who happened to be in my unit! I found out his tent was only 100 yards from me. One night, we played sheepshead in his tent. It was Al, Junior Hasley from Port Washington, a guy from Fond du Lac and a guy from Cedarburg. It was funny - nobody knew how to play sheepshead in Korea unless they were from Wisconsin.

Each day, we'd get our orders as to where we were to wire. Sometimes we worked during the day, but most of the time it was at night. I was the leadman on the wire and the next day a crew would come out and put it up on poles. We would lay the wire through rice paddies and over the mountains and wherever it needed to be. We had trouble when the monsoons came. We'd end up with a foot of mud and all the poles would come down. The only people that were moving during the spring monsoons were the infantry.

I remember one time we were having a meeting on a "deuceandahalf" about where we were going to lay the wire the following day. We were sitting there talking and all of a sudden, bullets were coming off the tailgate. Holy man, we jumped in the ditch! All of a sudden there were two, three guys coming down the road with big cowboy hats on. They were Australians and they were half potched! They were whistling and signing. We just let them go.

After I went through one winter there, I heard that the DSO [Division Signal Office] was looking for a draftsman. I put in for it and got it. I was in charge of all these little prints - when we ran new wire, I had to put it on this big map. Once a week, I'd get CQ: Charge-of-quarters. We'd have to take care of the password, too.

Sometimes we would get to watch movies or play ball. I played on Land O'Lakes for four years before I went into the military. I played ball with my Colonel who had played AAA ball. We also had USO shows and Marilyn Monore came through. The only time I saw her, though, was when I was walking in a ditch. That was when she was married to Joe DiMaggio and I asked where he was. She said, "He's in JAY-pan!" She also said, "It was nice talking to you!" when her driver told her it was time to leave.



Here are three buddies from Port Washington at Camp Casey, Korea in 1953: (left to right) Bill Bley, Jack Becker (pg. 18) and Jim Poull.

Harold Bloecher

Completed a "World Cruise" Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Though Harold Bloecher's official MOS was that of a military policeman in Korea, he admits that it was the travel to and from that country that he remembers most from his military experience.

I started out in basic training at Ft. Gordon, Ga., and after a 16-day furlough to come home, returned for advance military police training. After our training was complete, I was sent to Seattle, Wash., which was the last American mainland stop to Korea. We shipped out on the liberty ship SS Private Munivor and hit the Pacific the next morning. I remember we pitched and yawed - really bobbed around like a cork - and many of the guys were urpsing and vomiting and became deathly ill. It was so bad that the mess hall let loose and we had broken cups and trays in the mess hall



When Harold was drafted in 1952, he thought he'd be lucky if he was able to see the world, which he did.

Our next stop was Adak, Alaska, and then on to Yokohama, Japan. It was interesting because my birthday is June 10 at 10 p.m. and this was a big birthday because I was turning 21. We crossed the International Date Line on that day, so I really only celebrated my birthday for two hours.

We were then shipped to Ft. Drake near Tokyo where we received our equipment and turned in our Class A uniforms for combat fatigues.

A day or two boat ride from Yokohama took us to Pusan, Korea and my final duty station. I was assigned to the 8th Army, Second Logistical Command, 91st MP Battalion near Pusan. My job duties included guard duty, patrols and raids.

Korea was a place that you either liked or didn't like. I remember seeing signs that said "Yankee go home" and the smell of kimchee, which was fermented cabbage in big pots underground. Those jars were stuck everywhere. I also remember raw sewerage being dumped in the road to keep the dust down and the privy remains being scooped into rice patties, where the Koreans would walk around in bare feet to fertilize the rice paddies.

What really strikes me now are the changes in South Korea. When I was there, the only factories they had were silk factories and the country was very poor. They would take our old used oil and refine it for their equipment use. It is hard to believe that Hyundai now has big steel mills and car companies there. I

remember one of the gifts I sent home was a hand carved set that depicted various stations of Korean life, the papasans, the mamasans, etc. There's probably 10 or 12 statues, and we still have them here at home.

I left Korea when my 18 months were finished on Nov. 8, 1953, but I did not go directly home. The ship I was on was taking UN troops - Belgians, Greeks and Turks - back to Europe. We travelled along the Philippines and made a stop at Singapore; one of the Belgian troops became ill. We continued on through Borneo and Sumatra and on to Ceylon, which is now Sri Lanka.

We continued on through the Red Sea, the Suez Canal and on to Turkey, where the Turks got off. I had Turkish meat, and it tasted pretty good until I found hair in my food. We then went on to Athens; and the Greeks got off. We had one day of leave and I was able to do a complete tour of Athens for 25 cents: the stadium, the Acropolis Hill, the Parthenon. I have pictures and postcards from that stop. I also saw Maas Hill, the site where St. Paul gave Christianity to the Greeks.

At Laverno, Italy we dropped the Belgian troops off and picked up 600 American troops from Germany. We continued on through the Mediterranean and passed through the Straits of Gibraltar at night. There's no Prudential sign on the Rock of Gibraltar.

We were crossing the Atlantic in the winter, and it was very rough. We were tossed around quite a bit, but we safely made it to New York around December. 18, 1953. I had been on board ship for 40 days. The Statue of Liberty looked real good. I've always said that it was the travel that was more interesting than being in Korea. I made a trip around the world courtesy of the U.S. government, and it only cost me 25 cents that I spent in Athens. It wasn't a bad deal!

Col. John D. Boltz, ret.

Army Infantry Officer in Korea

As the son of a World War II Army officer and a graduate of the Missouri Military Academy, a military career was a natural choice for John upon graduation.

When I graduated in 1946, I decided to enlist in the Army because I wanted to get the leftover G.I. Bill of Rights from World War II. I spent 18 months as an enlisted man and then was honorably discharged as a sergeant. My Academy experience did help - I could do things that most newly enlisted men could not.

Once I was discharged, I started college at the University of Illinois at Navy Pier and joined the Illinois National Guard. I chose Chicago because two of my good buddies from the Academy were there. We all joined the National Guard and we all received our commissions as Second Lieutenants at about the same time.

The three of us also volunteered for active duty Army at the same time. We kept wondering if they would take us and they snapped us up so fast ... we were three dumb kids, damn fools really. But when you're a kid, you think you're immortal. You don't think anything will happen to you. I was the only one of the three of us who didn't come home with a Purple Heart. The funny thing is, I was always with one of them the entire time we were in Korea. If it wasn't one, it was the other, and it would change off.

Once we went active duty, we were sent to Ft. Riley, Kansas. We spent a few months doing supervisory training and teaching basic training. It was the Army's way of making young officers a little more dry behind the ears.

We took a ship to Japan. After we arrived we went to Chemical, Biological and Radiological Warfare School. Everybody had to do it, but thankfully I never used anything that I learned there.

When we finished our training, they took us to Sasebo and we sailed to Pusan. We ended up in the Seoul area and waited at a replacement depot until they needed us. In Spring 1952, I was assigned to the 40th Infantry Division, 160th Infantry.

We had very little contact with the Korean people, though we did have houseboys (which was illegal) and KATUSAs (Korean Augmentation to the United States Army) assigned to our platoons. I think the KATUSAs were probably screened for their intelligence. They also probably preferred serving with us because they were treated better than they were when they served with the Korean army. We didn't have a habit of shooting them if they disobeyed or something went wrong. Serving with us was a job for them; I didn't really see any bursts of patriotism or anything like that.

As infantry, we used rifles, pistols, hand grenades and other short-range weapons. We did take casualties on a regular basis, but they were not as severe as they could have been. We were there toward the end of hostilities. The negotiations were going on during this time, but the fighting didn't really stop. Later on, our regiment was sent to the Koje-do to guard Chinese and North Korean prisoners. Then we were on our way back to the line and ended up in the Kumhwa Valley behind the 3rd Division.

Once the truce was signed, I had sufficient points to go home and I elected to do so. The ship I was on was carrying American P.O.W.s and we were a very slow ship because they wanted time to interrogate them. They knew that some of them had cooperated while in captivity. We were told not to talk to them and I'm sure they were instructed the same of us. I did see them though.

There isn't much to do when you cross the ocean. There was no beer aboard ship. I do remember that we used to wash our laundry by threading rope through the arms and legs of our clothes and throwing it in the ocean behind the ship. It was great - the agitation really got the clothes clean - but only if the knot at the end held.

I returned in September 1953 and was assigned to Ft. Sheridan, Ill. I was moved to Camp Haven, which is now the site of the Whistling Straits golf course, and was assigned as the Executive Officer of the post. When my three-year appointment was up, I applied to continue, but they were cutting down the active duty army and I was discharged. I would have stayed active duty if I could have, but I ended up joining, at various times, the National Guard and Army Reserve in Michigan, Wisconsin and Illinois.

John went on to retire from the Army Reserve as a full colonel in 1980.



John says he's smiling in this photo because it was taken right after he returned from Korea - he was happy to be home in one piece.

Ken Brown

Served in the Navy's Nuclear Submarine Fleet

Ken Brown could literally write his own book about his experiences in the Navy. He shares the distinction of being a "mustang" or an officer who has risen from the ranks of enlisted personnel with his father, though in different branches of the Armed Services. Here are some of the highlights from the first half of his career.

I grew up everywhere and nowhere because my dad was a career Marine who also happened to be a mustang as well. When I moved to Grafton, it was the 29th time I'd moved in my life.

My dad retired in 1971; six months after his retirement I took my oath of office. My parents didn't have the money to send me to college and to be honest, I didn't exactly set any records with my grades. I was 19 years old and I saw the handwriting on the wall in regards to Vietnam.

I was hornswoggled by a recruiter into the Navy's Nuclear Program. I would become a submariner. Originally, I



was set to be an electronics technician, but I ended up being an electrician's mate. I wasn't too happy about that, but it was a better fit for me and worked to my advantage in terms of promotions.

I worked on two types of submarines during my tour in the Navy. The SSBN (ballistic missile submarine) would go on a set schedule of 105 days out, 95 days home. We actually had two crews, and when we were home, the other crew would take it out. We'd spend some time between missions to fix what was broke, reload and redeploy. Our job? To plot a spot in the ocean, go hide and hope no one ever called. Only a few people on board actually knew where we were and we rarely found out. We were more concerned about how many days were left until we could return home. We also had ceremonies to break the monotony. For example, we'd have "Half-Way Night" to celebrate the mid-point of our patrol and a "Blue Nose Ceremony," which was similar to the shell-back ceremony, for being north of the Arctic Circle. It included many ceremonial activities, including ice and a frostbitten rear end.

Being on a submarine crew required you to work in a very different atmosphere. We became very close and tight knit. We knew a little bit of everybody's job and every major system from the bow to the stern. We had to in case something went wrong. Usually there were 130 to 150 people on a crew and we would work six-hour shifts. You'd normally wake up 30 minutes before you had watch, eat, wash up and go relieve the guy coming off watch.

Our activities were pretty limited simply because we were on a submarine. We had rudimentary excuses for exercise equipment and there were some fitness fiends on board. My pastime of choice

Though most local veterans simply recognize Ken Brown as the county veteran's service officer, he "serves" with 22 1/2 years of Naval experience.

was reading. Before we would deploy, I'd go to the bookstore with my wife and scarf up every book I could find. I could read 10-15 books on a typical 80-day patrol.

Nuclear submarines offer a significant benefit over diesel submarines, which could only stay submerged for between 24 to 48 hours. We could stay submerged as long as our food held out. On a deployment, every available storage space was stacked full of canned goods. During the first month of a deployment, we would literally eat our way to the floor. We could also bring our own food on board to put in our own bunks, and I would load up with beef jerky, M&Ms and pudding cups.

We would communicate through "family grams," and my wife would get six for each deployment. They were communicated to us via radio and screened for bad news. I could not send any messages home. We would also exchange cards or presents if there were holidays or birthdays coming up, and save them to be opened on that day. Fortunately, I was also able to be with my wife when our children were born.

After spending eight years on ballistic missile patrols and two years on attack submarines, Ken made a career change and spent the rest of his career on the water instead of deep in it. He continued his education, received his commission as an ensign (which cut his pay for two years when he went from an E-8 to an O1-E) and eventually became a qualified surface warfare officer, retiring as a Lieutenant O-3 in 1994. The Navy's loss is our county's gain as Ken continues to advocate for veterans through his office at the courthouse in Port Washington.

E.H. Gunther Bruckner As told to Vicki Schanen

Interior Communications on the USS Lester and USS Providence

Gunther Bruckner had completed a year and a half at Marquette University before he decided he'd had too much. He admits he didn't know much about the trades and a friend of his parents had served at Pearl Harbor. That man liked the Navy and Gunther liked boats, making the Navy an appealing choice for the 21 year old.

I was 21 when I went in the Navy. I remember thinking during basic training, "The Navy has got to be better than this. People can't stay in the Navy for 20 years if it's like this." We had to hang our wash up in knots on a clothesline. We had to guard the dumpster all night long - they had to give us something to do.

I liked cars and worked in a gas station before I went in the Navy and I was able to sign up as a mechanic. When I first got in, however, they asked me if I wanted to go nuclear, which was six years. I remember saying, "I need to find out if I like it enough for four years, I better not sign up for six years." But one night, a guy over from me told me he was going to be an "IC man," which was interior communication and had to do with electricity. I didn't know anything about it - he said, "Don't worry. The Navy trains you - but I ended up changing my rate to it. I'm glad I did because I really did learn a trade.

After basic training, I didn't go to school. I was sent out to the East Coast for eight months. I was assigned to the USS Lester, DE. I was scheduled to be part of the IC Man group and get some hands-on training. We went up and down the East Coast.

I was pretty shy at that time and I stayed aboard ship a lot. It helped me save money so I could buy a car. I also showed a movie every night as part of my job and earned a dollar for each movie. Sometimes I'd show two movies: One for the chiefs and one for the ensigns. I'd make two dollars on those nights.

After I finished on the USS Lester, they sent me back to Great Lakes for my advanced training. During school, we'd take a test at the end of the week. If we did well, we'd get the weekend off. If we flunked twice, we'd be out of the program. I did well though and went home every weekend. I took the Interurban all the way home from Illinois. Sometimes I'd hitchhike from Milwaukee to Grafton. I always wore my Navy uniform and I never had a problem hitching a ride.

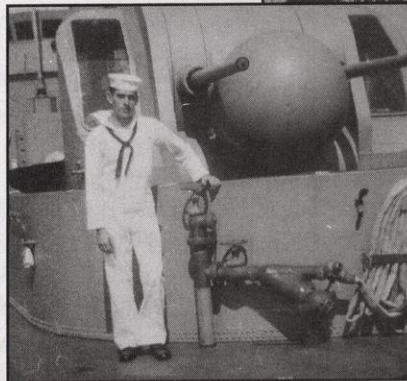
At the end of school, we had to fill out a paper on where we'd like to go. I remember putting down either the South Pacific or New Orleans. They sent me out to the USS Providence, COG-6. It was a guided missile cruiser, the flagship of the 7th Fleet and stationed in Yokoska, Japan.

I'd occasionally help out the cook. I also kept the barracks clean. I was starting out all over again after my training. I do remember I bought one uniform and a pair of shoes (which I kept spit shined) for inspections. I bought some fancier blues and whites, which were tailored, and that made you look fancier and a little different. After awhile, I worked my way up. I maintained the communications equipment. The USS Providence had telephones, so I had to go back to Great Lakes for additional telephone training.

I spent the rest of my naval career on the USS Providence. We stayed in the Pacific most of the time. We were almost always at sea. There's nothing like being two months at sea and going back to different ports. One of the ports we went in had little dingy boats and they'd want us to throw money in the water. They were so poor that they would dive in the dirty water for our coins.

One of my nicest experiences was Hong Kong; I was there twice. It was when Hong Kong was under English control. There was a big tram to go in the mountains and they had gardens. They had cars and oxen with carts with wooden wheels, all on the street at the same time. People would hang their wash from one skyscraper to another across the street. The Navy guys would get together and get rickshaws, but they'd pay the drivers a little extra to beat other rickshaw drivers in a race. It was an amazing experience.

I was there during the Vietnam war, but we didn't really have anything to do with what was going on. I also got to go to South Korea, which didn't have paved roads but did have dogs running all over the place. I bought a bunch of brass stuff that I shipped home to my mom and I still have.



(above) Gunther served with the Navy from October 1962 until October 1968. (left) Gunther aboard the USS Lester.

Member of the Marine's Silent Drill Team

Grafton High School graduate Scott Bscherer had scholarship offers to play football at the college level, but he decided to go into the service instead of "wasting his dad's money." He served with the U. S. Marine Corps from 1981 until 1984.

When I decided to go into the service, my buddy from high school, Al Tiegs [page 134], made sure I went in the Marines. Thanks, Al. He was on me pretty constantly, talking about the Marines. I think he thought it would be the best thing for me.

I had a choice of three or four years, thinking that if I didn't like it, three would be better. It worked out well, though, because if I had stayed in for four years, I would have ended up in Grenada. That was where the Marines were killed in their barracks. I also knew some of the guys who were stationed there when it happened.

I went in blind; I didn't get to pick what I did. I went to MCRD San Diego. We spent 15 weeks there because we didn't get picked up by a platoon right away. Training was pretty much hell compared to what it is now. I'm not a religious person, but in boot camp, I made sure I went to church every Sunday. It was the only sanity in the week. They were tearing us down and building us up.

After I graduated, I came home for a few weeks. I went back to Camp Pendleton for two weeks of Infantry Training School, which was a specialized school for grunts. While I was there, toward the end they had 16 Marines from "8th and I" in Washington, D.C., which is the barracks where the Marine Commandant is. It's one square block with the commandant's house, officer housing, other facilities, the parade field and, across the street, the barracks. They interviewed 400 of us for barracks duty to go back to Washington. Eight of us were picked for it instead of going into the Fleet Marine Force. They looked for certain traits and a certain look.

I didn't have a clue as to what I would be doing. I did know that was where the silent drill team was because I saw them in boot camp. They came to the recruit depot and put a show on for us, which was very impressive. They're part of the Honor Guard that travels, along with the commandant's band and the drum and bugle corps.

When the eight of us got to Washington, D.C., we had another interview. Certain guys went to a regular marching platoon, some went to be pall bearers and two of us got picked to be in the drill team. We arrived in December 1981.

As a member of the drill team, we'd get up at 4 a.m. and get our room squared away. After chow, we'd go into the underground parking lot and learn the drill. We did that all day long, seven days a week for two months and then in February, we flew down to Yuma, Arizona. We did a month of training down there at the Marine Corps Air Station. The silent drill team had no commands called out; it was memorized. Once a year, new people would join the team, which was 24 people. Sometimes it would be one or two, sometimes three. The entire team was not replaced. Sometimes people would rotate out or sometimes wash out.

The guys that made it were then part of a West Coast tour. We went up the coast of California to all the Marine Corps bases and do our Battle Color form. We travelled with the drum and bugle corps. It was a two-month tour. We'd only do one show a day, but we'd do shows during the weeks and on the weekend.

While we were in Yuma, we ran into some producers from Lynda Carter's television special and asked for us to do a little skit on her special. A big guy from Racine named Ken and I had to duke it out to go. I ended up beating out Ken and they flew us up to Hollywood. We received the royal treatment and we were on her show, which aired in 1982. I beat out Ken for the team position, too, but he stayed on in a different position.

Once we finished our tour, we returned to Washington, D.C. Our primary duties were a Friday night parade at 8th and I and a Tuesday night parade at the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington. The Friday night parade was a big deal - people would make reservations for the seats and the president would come. When I was the lead guy in the drill team, I was about 10 feet from the president.

We also went to the White House and served as guards when heads of state would come through. We also did funerals for military personnel. They also sent us to Camp David to protect President Reagan when he was there. We still did periodic infantry training, too.

Once you're on the drill team, you're pretty much on. The following November and December, we'd start training them and complete the same cycle. We'd also travel around the country. For example, we went to the Texas State Fair and spent two weeks there. Once a day we'd do our show. We had a lot of free time.

I did two years with the drill team and I spent the last year of service in the Marine's self-directed school. I was in charge of the grading department. I did it for six months and didn't want to do it anymore, so they put me in headquarters. I was able to work outside on the grounds and in maintenance before getting out early. I had time banked up. They tried to get me to re-up, but I didn't want to. I served my country and it was time to go home.

Frank Buchholz As told to his son, Allen Buchholz

Infantryman and Interpreter during World War II

My father, Frank Buchholz, was inducted into the U.S. Army on September 25, 1941. He experienced more variety in his four years, three months and 10 days of service than most soldiers. His tour of duty took him to eight states, the territory of Hawaii and three European countries.

After my induction I was sent to California. When the war started I was put on beach guard duty near Oxnard. You can't imagine how frightened California people were about a possible Japanese invasion.

After Basic Training at Fort Lewis, Washington I went to the island of Kauai in Hawaii in September 1942. There I acquired a very unusual war souvenir. I took a 25-mile trip to the private island of Niihau to get payroll signatures from three of our men.

Once on Niihau I learned about a Japanese Zero pilot who crash landed there after his attack on Pearl Harbor the year before. I was taken to the aircraft by my buddy, Joe Costa, and I said, "I've got to have a piece of this." I tore a piece from the "meatball" insignia and I still have it today. I met Ben Kanahale who had killed the pilot after a confrontation several days after the crash. (The residents of Niihau had no communications and were unaware of the attack on Pearl Harbor). Kanahale was butchering cattle on the beach when we arrived and we loaded our boat with the meat for our return trip to Kauai.

After Hawaii and some time in California and Texas, I decided to join the Army Air Corps to be a navigator. While attending the University of Arkansas, the Army decided they needed more foot soldiers and I was shipped off to Europe.

I arrived in France in February 1945 with HQ CO 16th Armored Infantry Battalion. I traveled across France, Germany and Czechoslovakia. Always a few steps behind the Germans, we finally caught up to the war in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. There I witnessed the surrender of thousands of Germans who wanted to give up to us rather than the Russians coming from the east. We had to protect German prisoners from the Czechs who wanted to attack those who had taken their businesses during the occupation.

On May 7, 1945, my brother Leo pulled up in front of the Metropol Hotel in Pilsen where I was taking a break. What a surprise! He had seen my company insignia on a jeep in the area and asked the officer driving where I was located. At first the officer wouldn't tell him because of wartime rules. My gosh, the war was going to be over in 24 hours! Finally he gave Leo my location. One of my favorite photos was taken at this meeting.

At this point I moved back into Germany and became an interpreter. In Geisenfeld, Germany I translated for the Town Major, the U.S. authority in Military Government. I helped refugees from Hitler's labor camps find their way back to their homes. The German and Luxembourg languages spoken at home came in pretty handy. The most stressful experience of that job was translating at a trial of a soldier accused of raping a German girl.

My return from duty took 13 days on the Zanesville Victory Ship from Marseilles, France to New York. The trip across the Atlantic was terrible and almost everyone on board was seasick.

On Christmas Eve 1945 I arrived at Fort Sheridan, Ill. I had a choice of discharge the day after Christmas or a 10-day leave with discharge to follow. I took the leave so I could be home for Christmas. I took the train to Milwaukee. The bus from Milwaukee to Grafton was cancelled due to fog. A man who was only going as far as Brown Deer picked me up while I was hitchhiking. He offered to take me to his home for dinner, but I explained my plans. He said, "Tell you what - I'll stop at home, tell my wife I'll be late, and I'll drive you to Grafton." He dropped me near Grafton and I called my brother-in-law to pick me up. I walked into a house full of surprised family for the best Christmas of my life! It was my first Christmas home in five years.

Frank and Clarice Buchholz built their home next to his birthplace in Grafton in 1952. The post-war years brought six children and 12 grandchildren who all live within 20 miles of that home.



A chance meeting of brothers Frank (left) and Leo (right) Buchholz in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, May 1945.

Point Man in Vietnam

After graduating from high school in 1965, Saukville native Jerry Dickmann worked in a machine shop for three years. At the time, everybody was getting drafted and he knew his turn would just be a matter of time.

I was drafted and I got infantry. There wasn't a lottery at the time. We were all getting drafted. I remember it was a rainy day - April 1st - and I flew from Milwaukee to Ft. Campbell, Ky. It was my first plane trip and we flew through a thunderstorm.

Being from up here, we could all read and write. But not everybody could. The night we arrived in Kentucky we were filling out paperwork at 2 a.m., 3 a.m. in the morning and the guy next to me didn't know how to write. The sergeant said, "Put an X down," and he made me initial it for him.



Jerry served with the Army from April 1968 until April 1970,

We did a lot of physical training in basic. You had to go across monkey bars in order to eat. If you couldn't, you had to wait until the end and then sometimes there wasn't any food left. By the end of basic, they made us go across and back before we could eat.

I did advanced infantry training at Ft. Lewis, Wash. There was one instructor who made an impression on me. He always said, "If you don't learn, you're going to die." He'd gone over [to Vietnam] once or twice before he was our instructor and came back, but he went over a third time and didn't come back. It was hard to understand that if you weren't paying attention now ... you were going over there and it was a lot different. The Army was just another version of the hunting and fishing we'd done in Wisconsin.

In September 1968 I shipped out of Oakland, Calif., on a commercial airliner. We landed out at Saigon. Every morning you'd get up and wait for your name to be called. If 10 people died, they'd take 10 more.

Vietnam was hot and it stunk. The Vietnamese people would burn human waste in big 55 gallon drums. They'd pour diesel fuel in the drums and light them on fire. That's what we smelled when we landed.

I was assigned to 1st Division, 2/28th Infantry, Charlie Company. We were called the "Black Lions," a straight-leg infantry division. "Straight-leg" simply meant that we walked. They would fly us out to an LZ [landing zone] and drop us off. Sometimes we'd land in a camp, other times they'd throw us out in a big field. We were a point unit - there were 11 or 12 of us - and we led everybody. I became a point man and our platoon led a lot of the big stuff. We were down in the south.

Our base camp was in Lai Kai. There were maybe 12 buildings: a mess hall, a club, barracks and the company's commanding officer's headquarters. But we were typically always out and we always took our belongings with us. We'd come out of the field maybe once a month, sometimes more frequently. We'd get resupplied by the Chinook helicopters. They carried big, black bladders of water underneath and that was our drinking water. I still have an aversion to anything warm. That was my promise to myself when I left: I'd never drink anything warm again.

Sometimes a regular chopper would just drop stuff on the ground in an open field. We'd pop colored smoke. They'd know what color we were popping ahead of time. The enemy would sometimes listen in on the radio and set off smoke as well.

When we were in the field, we'd sleep wherever. We slept in the stars every night. Six months out of the year you couldn't see your feet because it was so dry and there was so much dust; the other six months of the year you couldn't see them because it was so wet. But Vietnam was a very pretty country. It's like here - we have snow and grass, they have dust and mud.

The people in Vietnam were really uneducated. They didn't really understand what was going on. All they wanted was a 20x20 square foot plot to plant rice on. A lot of them had a little mound next to the paddy where they'd bury their ancestors. They were just pawns in the whole thing. I didn't know exactly how it worked because they'd live in a village and then they'd walk out to the paddies. It was like the communal gardens that you see around here now.



Jerry in front of a bunker in Vietnam.

Gunner's Mate and Instructor during World War II

Grafton native Nick Dickmann served with the Navy from August 1943 until June 1947. He was one of six children, and the only son in the family. He completed his second year of high school before joining the Navy.

I didn't want to join the Army, so I enlisted in the Navy when I was 16. I had to wait until I was 17 to get my orders. I never thought about the Air Force or Marines (which I didn't like too much anyhow). I was a little dumb. I wanted the USN so I took the kiddie cruise for four years. I didn't know anything about the USNR. I had the standard basic training - about an eight-week course. After boots I went on an eight-day leave and then returned for schooling to become a gunner's mate. Now don't get confused - I didn't shoot the guns, I just repaired them.

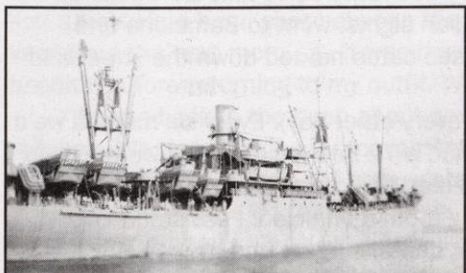
I was then sent to Price's Neck, R.I., a little piece of Rhode Island that sticks out into the Atlantic Ocean. I was a full-fledged instructor at 17, and I was teaching the guys at the Anti-Aircraft Training School how to shoot the guns. Some of the guys I was teaching were old enough to be my father. They would ship guys up from New York or wherever a ship pulled in. They wanted to keep their eyes sharp, so they'd practice with us.

At that time, we didn't wear any protective covering over our ears, which is why I'm hard of hearing now. But we mostly had the smaller stuff - we had 40 mm and 20 mm. I was there as an instructor until January 1945.

At that point, I was transferred to the USS Washburn. I was no longer an instructor; I was a gunner's mate. The ship had just been commissioned. I missed the actual shake down cruise because I got the mumps and ended up in the hospital. Instead of picking it up at Pier 92 in New York, I picked it up in Norfolk, Va.

On June 15, 1945 at 12 noon, we shoved off for Marseilles, France. There were a lot of differences between Grafton and France. At first, I couldn't figure out why just about on every street corner behind a little fence there were two footmarks. It was for when you had to go potty. The best thing we did occurred on July 4 ... we shoved off for the Panama Canal. I was glad to get out of there. We went through the Panama Canal in six or seven hours and headed toward Manila.

Our orders were changed on August 20 - we were headed to Leyte and we operated all around the Philippines. Right after that I made gunner's mate second class, which was unusual for a kid my age (19). We arrived in Manila nine days after the cessation of hostilities.



Nic served on the USS Washburn AKA-108 (auxiliary cargo attack), shown here around 1946 while in China. The ship was named after Washburn County and the crew's "old man" was from Madison.

We then operated between Manila and the Japanese ports. In March 1946, we shoved off for Shanghai, China, then Samar. On Easter Sunday 1946, we headed home to the States. On April 28 - in the middle of the Pacific - our main engine went out. We had to make a new bearing, but we passed under the Golden Gate Bridge on May 9, 1946 at 1 p.m. I don't think they knew what to do with us - we did a lot of shoveling along the coast. We had a lot of guys who would be discharged when they hit the beach. I had six months to go. The ship headed overseas, but they also let me off because there would be too much paperwork involved in the process. I was honorably discharged six months later.



(above) Nic Dickmann joined the Navy at 16 in 1943. (right) Here he is posing in 1944 while on leave with his dad's car, a 1936 Terraplane.

On September 6 we arrived at San Fernando and loaded up. We carried eight big landing craft and 16 small ones. We loaded up with troops and boats. We joined a convoy and headed for combat duty in Japan. We were headed for Wakayama. We went in between the last island and the mainland.

This was supposed to be the first initial invasion of Japan. We didn't know they dropped the Atom bomb; everything was secret. When we went in, the Missouri was already in Tokyo Bay. We dropped off troops and headed back for Luzon, hitting a typhoon on the way. That was scary, too, but we rode it out. We made a second trip to Matsuyama on October 10, 1945.

We then headed to New Guinea, which required us to cross the equator. I was charged with "disrespect to shellbacks" and for having the most beautiful lock of hair. It was fun, though.

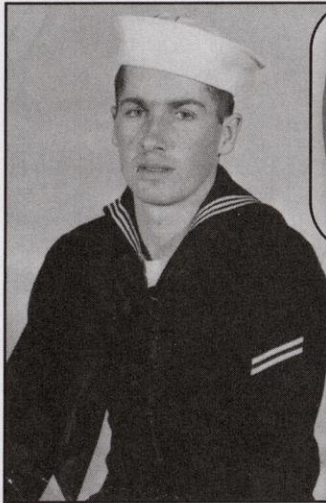
Matthew Diker

Naval Hospital Corpsman

Brooklyn native Matt Diker traded in the fast-paced life and subways of Manhattan to enlist in the Navy a few months after he graduated from high school. He thought a stint in the Navy would be a new challenge.

I took a four-year enlistment because it offered a chance to go to Class A School. I left for boot camp in October 1957. One thing that really caught me off guard was that there was a woodburning stove in the train on the Northshore Railroad. The vastness of Great Lakes was also a change for me.

I didn't really like Chicago but we sure enjoyed going on liberty in Milwaukee where the friendliness and affection toward us was very high. We'd stow our things at the U.S.O. lockers, go to dances and take in games at County Stadium. I met my wife, Diane, at a U.S.O. dance and we were married while I was in the Navy.



Matt was part of the Honor Class of Hospital Corps School at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, 1958. He also still has his belt buckle from his time in the Navy.



I trained as a ward corpsman, which was the equivalent of a nurse in a civilian hospital, in Class A School. We would give shots and medication, and I worked on a surgical ward. After I finished Class B School, I became an operation room corpsman, and my job was to assist the doctors. We'd hold retractors and do basic sew-ups after surgery. It was a good job for me because I wasn't squeamish and I'd seen death before. It didn't bother me.

At one point, I was stationed at the Philadelphia Naval Hospital, which I liked because on Fridays I could take the subway to the Philadelphia train station and catch the 5 o'clock train back home. I'd then return on Sunday.

In October 1959, I received an automatic transfer to Naples, Italy. The Berlin Wall had gone up and there were also other situations that required increased security, so we all had a year added to our tours. I was interested in going overseas, but I was married. Thankfully, my wife was able to go with me. Our two oldest children, Matthew John and Elizabeth Ann, were both born in

Italy and had dual citizenship. My son had to renounce his Italian citizenship when he registered for the draft and my daughter had to when she voted for the first time. We lived on the economy and had a small apartment in Naples, Scala #3. It was a mixture of service people and Italian nationals. I was required to take 16 weeks of classes in Italian when I arrived. We did some travelling - we saw many Italian sights, went to Barcelona and attended the 1960 Olympics. Italy had a very different culture; you would see cattle herded down the street and guys with buckets of fish on their heads. They tolerated us.

In Italy we would work regular shifts, which we called port/starboard (every other day). Every six months we'd have to do 30 days straight of night duty from 9 p.m. until 7 a.m. Naples had a 72-bed hospital and we provided dependent services, served as a transport point and supported the Sixth Fleet. I also trained to operate with the Marine Corps, but I never had to do it. By this time I was a senior operating room technician. I assisted in about 300 surgical operations while in Italy and was assigned to general surgery, dental surgery and gynecology. It was difficult having to work on someone we knew. One of our personnel men was shot in the stomach and we ended up losing him. We didn't keep fresh blood on hand. Instead, we were all required to be on a duty list to donate blood. Our commanding officer needed to know where we were at any given time. I gave 10 pints in three years.

When my tour was up, we came home. Word was getting back about what was starting in 'Nam, and the Navy saw fit to discharge me. I was discharged as an HM3 and put in one more year in the Inactive Reserves. I ended up with five years of active duty and one year inactive. I also had a job waiting for me back in Milwaukee, though I ultimately went back to school to become a printer and eventually went into facilities management before retiring. I am now active in emergency government in Saukville. I am also an active member of the Landt-Thiel Post 470, where I have held every position at some time. In 2003, I served as post chaplain and Sgt at Arms for the county.

My son, Michael, joined the Army when he graduated from high school, and he served with the 82nd Airborne in Grenada, though he too has since been honorably discharged. Diane and I now have five children and four grandchildren, including three grandsons who have been adopted from Russia.

Gary Dowe

Marine Machine Gunner in Vietnam

Gary Dowe dropped out of school at 16. When he realized his future looked pretty dim, he decided to enlist in the service. By the time he was 19, he'd earned two Purple Hearts for his service in Vietnam.

When I decided to enter the service, the Marines was not my first choice. My dad had been in the Navy, and I though I'd try for the Navy, Air Force or Coast Guard. But this was 1966, and there was a waiting list for all of those branches. Plus I was a dropout. I had to choose between the Army and the Marines, and I thought, "Well, anyone can go in the Army." I knew the Marines were a first-rate outfit, but beyond that I didn't know much else.

I wasn't 18 when I finished training in San Diego so I was sent to Camp Lejeune, where I became part of an outfit that was setting up to go on a Caribbean cruise. I couldn't stand the preparations, the inspections, so I started volunteering to go to Vietnam. I couldn't until I turned 18, and when that day came, they sent me back to California and I was on my way to Vietnam.

I'd heard a few stories from guys who'd returned from their tours. They'd done full tours and seen little to no action, though I did realize that people were being killed. I thought the girls would think that it was pretty cool that I'd been there. Boy, did I have a surprise coming.

I'd been out on patrols for about two to three weeks with the 1st Marines, 5th Marine Division, Delta Co., Weapons Platoon at Hill 63 in the Que Son Valley. We went out on our next patrol and came under attack on three sides. I wasn't in the best shape - I had amoebic dysentery from drinking the water and was originally supposed to be in the hospital. On top of that, the butt of my M-60 had gotten hooked on something and had started falling apart.

I was shot in the thigh and did a flip over into a rice paddy. There were three of us - one guy had been shot in the stomach and there was nothing I could do for him. I laid completely motionless because I could see the enemy walking back and forth on the dikes. In fact, one of them threw a hand grenade at us and it hit my helmet and rolled away. I started saying my prayers, but it was a dud and never exploded. Our jets were coming over once in awhile and they would drop bombs. I knew I couldn't lie there much longer - I'd been motionless from about noon until 4 p.m. that day - so I thought the next time our jets came over I would make a run for cover. Of course, once I had made that decision, it was like, "Okay, where are the bombs?"

I did run for it and made it back to our platoon, where there were a number of injured Marines. The corpsman had just finished taking care of me and was turning to go to the next guy when I saw the back of his helmet lift up just a hair. He'd been shot between the eyes and the bottom of his helmet by a sniper. I ended up being medicated out the next morning - it was me, the Chinook 47 crew and 10 dead bodies - and spent three weeks in the hospital before returning to my outfit. While I was gone, just about everyone in my outfit had been wiped out.

I'd been back in the bush about a week, week and a half when we were out on a battalion patrol in a riverbed. We were looking for movement, for insurgents. I'd set down my machine gun and was sitting up on the side of the riverbed when the enemy started shooting right down the riverbed at us. I couldn't get up to get my machine gun. They'd do that and leave. They did weird stuff to us, particularly at night. They'd blow whistles, yell out American names, like "Joe." Anyway, there was an explosion, a hand grenade, that went off by my feet and I felt my foot go numb. My first thought was that my feet had been blown off. Apparently there was a second explosion because the next thing I knew, I woke up and a corpsman was asking me how old I was. The next time I woke up I was in a hospital in Okinawa. I had shrapnel in my hands, feet and it came through the top of my helmet.

After I healed up, which I did pretty well, I was stationed in Okinawa, which was on my wish list. I was given top secret clearance and my duty was to guard nuclear weapons. I later served in the Philippines and finally got around to going on a Caribbean cruise that included jungle training school in Panama. We had a blast.

I did have good experiences. I also received a lot of letters from home as well as care packages from my grandma. She'd send me Paulus' summer sausage (the casing would be moldy, but I'd just wash it off), cans of Franco-American spaghetti and soup (and I can still eat that stuff cold right out of the can) and her fruitcake (which the guys just loved). I also enjoyed the cuisine of the Far East, but I just couldn't eat rice for a long time after I returned home from Vietnam. I met my wife, Valarie, at a youth dance at the VFW Hall in Belgium a few months after I returned. We've been married 34 years and have one daughter, Kelly, who now lives in California.



Gary joined the Marines at 17 and was in country shortly after his 18th birthday.

LTC John Duffy, USAF As told to Vicki Schanen

Navigator and Pilot

Though Cedarburg's John Duffy always had a job waiting at his dad's business, Duffy Construction, he set his sights on the sky when it came to his future. After a year or so of college, he decided to join the Air Force.

The only slot I could get into right away was navigator training. It took a year to become a navigator/radar operator. I wanted an assignment to an Air Rescue Squadron and the NCO had an assignment with the 100th ARS, but when I got there I found out that ARS stood for Air Refueling Squadron, which was also part of the Strategic Air Command, not "Air Rescue Squadron."

At that time in my career, I was a refueler navigator. Basically, it was up to me to rendezvous with the receiving aircraft. This was during the Cold War and there was a lot of tension. Sometimes there would be atmospheric conditions that would trick the radar. Everyone would scramble and get up in the air - we'd be up there, the bombers would be heading north and they'd decide it wasn't really a threat and call everybody back. We wanted the Russians to understand that if they pulled the trigger, they'd get hammered.

Later I was temporarily stationed at Thule, Greenland, which is near the North Pole. We would go up and re-fuel the RB-47 reconnaissance planes that were coming back from Russia. We could also get information from Russian shortwave radio. They had ladies similar to Axis Sally and Tokyo Rose who had radio shows. When we arrived, they said, "Welcome the 100th ARS to Thule, Greenland! We'd like to specifically welcome the crews of ..." and they named the names of our crews.

I went to pilot training in 1959 on single-engine prop aircraft and ultimately learned how to fly jets and on to helicopter school. I was stationed at K.I. Sawyer in Michigan and was soon flying rescue helicopters. I also flew T-33s for the Air Defense Command, which were the target aircraft for the F-101 Interceptors. It was the most boring flying I had ever done. In a helicopter, you're scooting along on the ground, which I found more interesting.

From there, I wondered what I had done wrong because I was sent to Newfoundland. As it turned out, that was probably one of the best assignments I'd ever had. My wife and two daughters came with me. I was the commander of a rescue unit with four helicopters. The "Newfies" always needed to be rescued. Every



John Duffy flew more than 5,000 hours, including more than 500 combat time hours and 136 combat missions in Laos and North Vietnam.

spring they would go out and club seals. Sometimes their ice flow would break away and they'd need to be rescued. They always wanted to put their dead seals in our helicopters first, which we would not do. Sometimes, they would go back out the next day in boats to get the seals we made them leave behind.

I was then sent to Headquarters Rescue in Orlando, Fla. I did a lot of work in developing a helicopter for the air rescue business, the Sikorsky H-53 [also known as the Jolly Green Giant]. I spent a lot of time at the Sikorsky factory helping to draw up the equipment that would be on it and doing some flight test work. In 1968, the Air Force finally signed a contract to buy some H-53s and I signed a voluntary contract to go to Vietnam and fly them.

Technically, I was assigned to Thailand but I was really flying in Laos. I couldn't be assigned to Laos because the Geneva Convention said that there would be no U.S. forces in Laos. When we went in there, we went in as civilians. Our helicopters were not marked and we didn't wear any insignia. We were not supposed to carry any weapons on the ground but we could have them in the helicopter. I paid attention to that for about the first half-hour. I could hear machine gun fire all around. I said, "To hell with that rule," and ran back to my helicopter to get my personal weapons, an M-16 and a .38 cal S&W.

Our job in Laos was to rescue the downed fighter pilots. They were flying bombing strafing missions in Laos and North Vietnam. We'd go to strike sights without even knowing what was going on. We'd start in the morning and follow the strike forces around, trying to immediately pick up the downed pilots. If you could pick them up right away, their chances were pretty good. If you waited a couple of hours, that would give the enemy time to surround him, but not capture him. They'd let the downed pilot talk. When we came in to pick him up, they would shoot up the helicopter. It was important for us to make the pick up as soon as we could.

John ultimately went on to earn the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal and eight air medals, among others, before retiring in 1974.

Donald Eernisse

Survived a German U-Boat Attack in the Indian Ocean

When Donald Eernisse was drafted into the Army in 1944, he truly became part of the calvary. His basic training included work with horses, which was right up the alley of this Grafton native. Little did he know, however, that his most momentous military experience wouldn't be on the back of a horse or even on land. It would be off the shore of Australia.

In the calvary we were trained to go where the tanks and half-trucks couldn't go. The horse came first and you came second, because without the horse you had no transportation. Based on our training, we knew we'd end up somewhere, but they never told you where you were going.

After training we boarded a Liberty ship, the SS Peter Sylvester, and found out that we were headed to the India-Burma-China Theater. We were also surprised to find out that though we had trained on horses, we would be using mules. There were 137 mules on board with us. The mules were more sure-footed than the horses. They were kept in sheds around the top deck and in the hole. Periodically during the trip we would have to walk them around for exercise.

We had to make a stop in Melbourne, Australia before heading on for more water and fuel, and we were slowed down because someone on ship needed an emergency appendectomy. Because we were late, we missed the convoy heading to Calcutta, India. Our captain decided that we'd continue on ourselves and we headed to Colombo, Ceylon. We bobbed around like a lone cork out there in the middle of the ocean. On February 6, 1945 at about 9:50 p.m., we were hit by a torpedo from U-682, a rogue German U-boat.

It was close to lights out, but we were under a blackout anyway. I was down in the hole on my bunk bed. Right after we got hit, I took a step forward and went straight down. There was nothing there. I remember there were guys playing cards on the hatch covers, and they went straight up because the hatch covers blew off when we were hit. I tried climbing back up on a hose but I kept sliding; I then saw a ladder and was able to get back up.

At this point, the Peter Sylvester hadn't sunk, and everyone was scurrying around. We were hit an hour later and that cut the ship in half. I later saw the U-boat surface and we could see the swastika on the side. It circled us once and then took off. We were able to get an SOS out before the ship was abandoned.

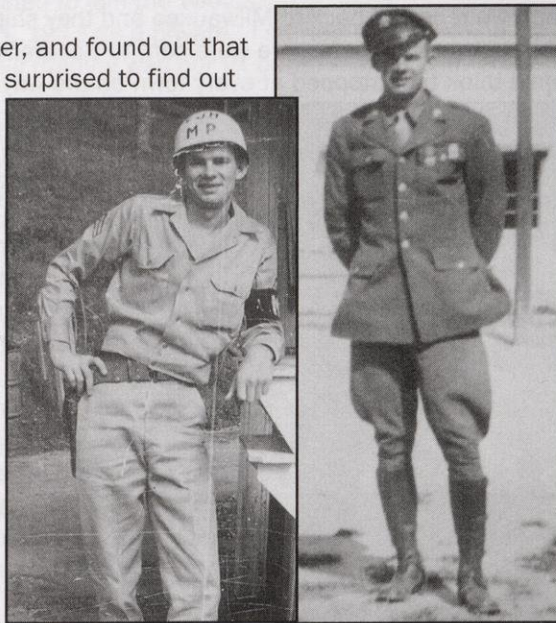
I ended up in a life raft and we threw in what we could find such as water and blankets. We certainly weren't dressed for abandoning the ship; all I had on was my underwear. Each life raft had cartons full of rations and we figured out that we had enough tins of food to last us 30 days. We would each get a cracker the size of a graham cracker, a quarter can of meat and 3 ounces of water. We could have all the water we could catch if it rained.

But you also have to remember that we were surrounded by debris, floating supplies and mules. We could see two other life rafts and eventually we were able to tie the three rafts together. Anytime a box would float by, we'd grab it and tie it to our raft. We found a box of cigarettes and started chain smoking. The mules that weren't harnessed were swimming around and, at one point, one tried to climb aboard our raft. We happened to have two veterinarians on board and they told us to grab the mule's ear and twist it, and that's the direction the mule would head. They were right.

Everyone in our raft was in pretty good shape. At one early point we did see an Australian plane, but it didn't see us. The first group to be rescued was picked up in three days; we were picked up in seven days. The last raft was out 38 1/2 days, and they were in pretty bad shape. There were 92 survivors of the SS Peter Sylvester. As for the crew of the U-682, they were eventually taken prisoner by the Japanese. The Japanese later surrendered the submarine to the Allies and was scuttled in 1946 by the British in the Strait of Malacca. The remains of the Peter Sylvester, as well as my wallet, are still on the bottom of the Indian Ocean.

Of the three rafts in our group, which was about 50 men, only about one or two could walk. We had to be carried aboard ship. We were dehydrated to some extent, and our first meal consisted of soup. We had absolutely nothing, no clothes, no possessions, and when we docked at Fremantle, Australia, we were given naval chief uniforms because they didn't have anything else for us to wear. We made the most of that situation.

I went on to the South Pacific where I eventually became a military policeman. I think my experience in the military did me a lot of good. I could've been a real stinker, but I think I turned out okay.

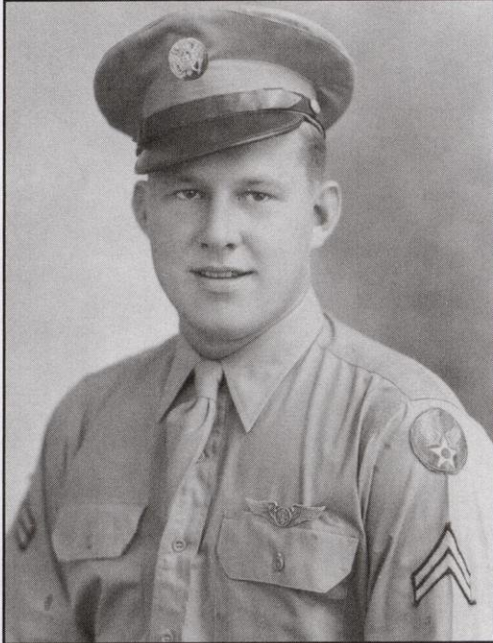


(above) Don in his original calvary uniform. (left) As a military policeman.

Army Air Corps Crew Chief in the CBI Theater

My uncle Earl graduated from Grafton High School in 1940 and was working at International Harvester in Milwaukee when he decided to enlist in the military. His reason: He wanted to fly. Though he admits that he decided to never think about his military experience after he left, he decided to share his story for this book.

I enlisted on my own and I picked the Army Air Corps. While I was in it, it became the United States Air Force. Everything stayed the same; just the name changed. Our physical was done in Milwaukee and a few days after that, we reported back to Milwaukee and they shipped us via train to Chanute Field in Illinois. We were only there about three days before we were sent to Goodfellow Field in Texas. That was a train ride, too. It was like a milk run. I think they stopped at every town on the way. We were still like civilians. We didn't get uniforms until we got to Goodfellow Field.



Earl served with the Army Air Corps Air Force from September 1942 through February 1946 and continued his service in the Reserves from February 1946 through September 1950.

When we got down there, we had one week of basic training. The only things we shot in basic training were carbines and a .45. We didn't carry weapons until we went overseas, and then they issued us sidearms and ammunition for them.

We had one month of school and then we were on the lines preparing airplanes. We had Multivibrators PT-13s at Goodfellow. We each had six planes to crew and when they came in from night flying, you'd have to check them over and tie them down.

I remember one guy didn't tie his down and the master sergeant came in and told me to tie them down. He told me he would make me do it, and I still refused. He was this big Texan and he took a swing at me and he missed. I ducked and I came around and hit him on the left side of the jaw. It took him out and I went from corporal to private. But being a private, I didn't have to crew any airplanes. They were pretty short of guys, too. Three days later, I got promoted to corporal.

I was there about a year and a half before going to Shepherd Field at Wichita Falls, Texas. We worked on Taylorcraft and Cubs. From there I went to South Plains AFB in Lubbock, Texas. I worked in the air and on the ground. We were still mechanics but we were called crew chiefs. We towed gliders and I became a C-47 crew chief.

I was then sent to Enid, Okla., where we were flying B-25s. We did one week of overseas training in Idaho before we went to California to prepare for shipping out. I was supposed to go overseas as part of a B-25 crew, but when I got overseas, I worked on P-51 fighter planes. An engine is an engine and a carburetor is a carburetor, so it wasn't that big of a change for me though they did have books for us.

We left in June 1945 and ended up in Perth, Australia, en route to Calcutta. My brother, Don [previous page], was there at the same time. It was right after he'd been torpedoed, but I didn't know any of what had happened to him until I returned home. When I went over on the ship, I volunteered to work as a cook so I'd have something to do and get plenty of good eats. On the way back, I signed up as a baker.

We were in Calcutta about a week or two before we were put on a train and shipped to Chabua, India. After about a week we flew the Hump and then went on to China. At each stage, they'd assign you to one place, then the next place, then the next place, then you'd finally get a permanent assignment. I had no idea where I was going - it was "hurry up and wait." I did have time to go all over Calcutta. It was filthy. I was in Calcutta when my son was born. The Red Cross wouldn't even notify me, so that was the end of the Red Cross for me. I learned about his birth by a letter from my wife, Georgia.

I got assigned to the 528th Fighter Group, which moved to Kunming until the end of the war. It was a pretty safe place to be. We flew two more missions after the second bomb was dropped and then the war was over. We celebrated with quart bottles of rice beer, which was pretty good. I was ready to go home at that point, but I was "shanghaied to Shanghai." We spent from August 1945 until February 1946 ferrying ships and everything from the interior of China to Shanghai. We were supposed to ship home after our last mission, but our ship had already left and we had to wait for the next one. It took us about three weeks to get to Ft. Lewis and then we took the another "milk train" all the way to Camp McCoy. When we got there, they had two lines. If you signed up for the Reserves, they'd get you home right away. I did that. I'd been around the world twice and I was glad to be home.

Georgia V. Fluharty Eernisse

As told to her niece,
Laurie Eernisse Schwalbe

Dietician during World War II

While studying accounting at Fairmount State College in her home state of West Virginia, Georgia started looking for a new adventure. That adventure turned out to be the Women's Army Air Corps.

I was the second oldest of seven children born to Jefferson and Margaret Fluharty and was raised in a West Virginia mining town. At that time, if you went to college, you knew you had to pay your own way. As with many others, I had to work two to three jobs to support myself and pay for college. Discouraged with the way things were going, when some friends told me they were enlisting, I decided to join the WAACs.

I was inducted at Ft. Hayes in Columbus, Ohio, on January 23, 1943 as a private. I started basic training as Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga. One of the things I remember most about basic training was our PT outfit: A dress with green and white crinkle crepe bloomers.

Basic training lasted four weeks and then I had two additional weeks on special orders. While I was stationed there I worked in the bakery. One night between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., we baked more than 1,000 loaves of bread. I don't ever remember being as tired as I was when our shift ended.

My first assignment was South Plains Air Force Base in Lubbock, Texas. Lubbock was the last training field for glider pilots. We went by train and the trip lasted two days. At that time, the civilians did not give up their seats for service men and women so we rode most of the way sitting on our suitcases.

At South Plains I computed rations for the Eighth Air Force Service Command. My duties on the post were to clear the patients' menus at the hospital, the meals for enlisted men and officers and do all the ordering of food supplies. It was very interesting work and, at that time, I made sergeant. This is also where I met my future husband, Earl Eernisse, an airplane mechanic serving in the Air Force.

Activities on the base were pretty limited: Movies for 10 cents, the baseball team and the NCO club were all we had. One entertainer whom I saw that I will always remember is William Gargan. He was very funny after after the show, my girlfriend Wanda and I went to meet him. She asked him for a memento and he replied he had nothing. So Wanda took out a small pair of scissors and cut off half of his tie. He was very good-natured about it and we all had a good laugh. I also belonged to the choir at the South Plains Air Force Chapel and we sang on the Lubbock radio station.

In June 1943, the WAACs were taken into the U.S. Army. The following day I was sworn into the newly formed Women's Army Corps (WAC) with full military status and benefits. At that time, many women chose to be disbarred from the Army because they were disappointed with the Army's waste of their abilities and the way some of the enlisted men treated the women. As with any controversial subject, some men were glad we were there and some men made it as difficult as they could. Other than a few minor instances, I had a very positive experience in the service.

On October 5, 1944, Earl and I were married at Ft. Worth Air Base chapel. I was only able to enjoy married life for four months before my husband was sent overseas. In June 1944, I was sent to the Pentagon for two weeks on detached service. The South Plains base was going to be closing and I needed to learn how to close top-secret documents. At that time the Pentagon was in the process of being built and we were some of the first occupants. We were given sawbucks with a door over the top to use as a desk. I was a staff sergeant, and in charge of food and menu records at the hospital and the base office for post rations and menus.

South Plains AFB closed and I was sent to Fort Worth AFB. My discharge came on March 8, 1945. I was called into the commander's office later that day and told I would be shipping overseas. I respectfully replied, "No, I'm not." He didn't know I already had my discharge papers in my pocket. Instead, I moved to Grafton where I waited for my husband to return and we could re-start our married life.

Georgia and Earl now live in Grafton. They raised four children, who raised 10 children and the family tree continues to grow. Georgia is a member of Rose-Harms American Legion Post #355 and an Auxiliary member in Grafton. She says that if she could do anything different, she would have stayed in and made a career out of the Army. She would like to dedicate this page to her deceased brother J.Jay Fluharty, a captain in the Army who served for 22 years.



Georgia in the WAAC, 1944.

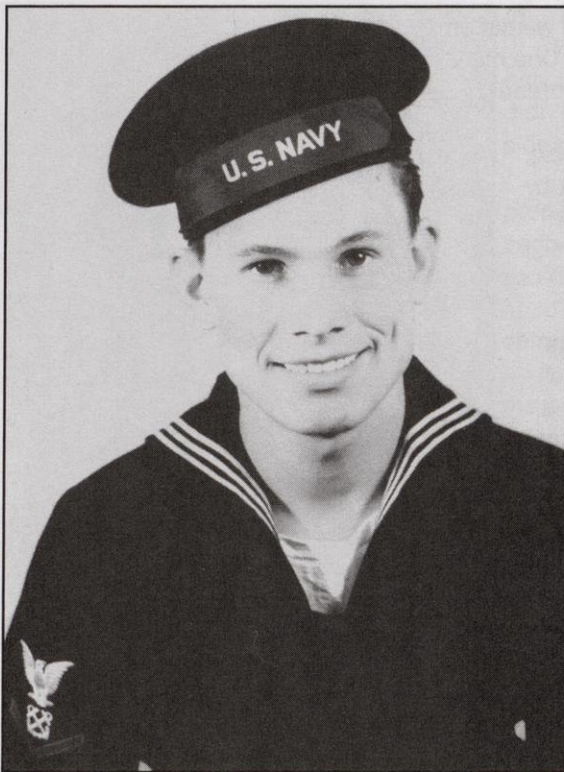
Robert "Bob" Eernisse

As told to his granddaughter, Sheri Schwalbe

Served with the 8th Special Stevedore Battalion of the Seabees

I enlisted in the Navy Seabees in January 1943 not wanting to be drafted. I took the only branch of service that was still open to enlistments. My tour of duty took me from Grafton, to boot camp in Newport News, Va., to basic training in Camp Perry, Richmond, Virginia. From there I went to advanced training in Camp Endicott, Darisville, R.I., to duty in Kodiak and Point Barrow, Alaska.

Boot camp proved to be quite an experience. We lived in "Tent City" because there were no barracks available, and experienced more physicals, shots and an introduction to the Seabees way of life. We would train for stevedore, maintenance or construction battalions. I became a stevedore and went to Camp Perry for further training of loading and unloading ships.



Bob Eernisse left Grafton for a tour of duty in Alaska with the Seabees during World War II.

The scene of these operations was the S.S. Neversail, which was securely anchored to the marsh alongside the York River. The same cargo was loaded and unloaded day and night until a high degree of efficiency had been acquired.

On May 16th the battalion was pronounced ready for duty. We went to Camp Endicott where military equipment was issued. We also put in a week at "Sun Valley" where stevedore operations were polished under actual working conditions. We had to execute field maneuvers, test the new carbines on the firing range, run or limp over obstacle courses and live under simulated Island X conditions.

On July 10th we went by train to Camp Rousseau, Port Heuneme, Calif., where we were issued cold-weather gear. From California we took the train to Seattle, Wash., where we received a Fleet Post Office address, boarded a troop ship and were assigned to a cabin shared by 49 other guys. Island X turned out to be Kodiak, Alaska, where half of us were dropped off. The rest went on to Attu Island. We then learned that there had been an attack by Japan on Attu. When the Armed Forces came in on one side of the island, the Japanese went out the other side.

Kodiak was the main supply base for the Aleutian Islands and we loaded ships with ammunition and supplies for all of the islands. Our tour of duty there lasted until April of 1945, at which time I was given a 30-day leave, my first since boot camp in May 1943. I came home and married my high school sweetheart, Marvella Hilgart.

Reporting back to duty, my battalion was informed that we would be taking three cargo ships, (one regular Navy cargo vessel and two Merchant Marine Liberty ships) from Tacoma up through the Bering Straits into the Arctic Ocean and as far as you can go in Alaska to Point Barrow.

Before the war, Standard Oil was drilling for oil in Point Barrow but when war broke out this drilling operation was taken over by the Navy. Now, to get to Point Barrow by ship there is a time period of about 30 or 40 days a year when it warms up enough that the ice breaks up. A current takes the ice north for that period and then reverses and comes back and piles up on the beaches. This is the reason Point Barrow has no docks. The three shiploads of cargo would be delivered to the Navy drilling operation and an eskimo village in Point Barrow. Since you can only get there by ship once a year, we were taking their year's supply of food and necessities.

We had to anchor about a half mile off the beach and unload onto 3 x 5 pontoon barges and LCMs [Landing Craft Medium] and take them to the beaches. It was kind of tricky loading onto a barge that was bobbing up and down. We got out of there just as the ice started to come back in. It took 10 days to get back to San Francisco.

After a bit of state side duty, it was time to get mustered out. So I arrived back in good old Grafton to my wife and our families on Thanksgiving Day in 1945. I had a lot to be thankful for.

Today Bob Eernisse still resides with his wife Marvella in Grafton. They raised 9 children. Bob continues to be involved in the Fire Department and works as the Grafton Fire Inspector. He keeps in touch with the 8th Special Stevedore Battalion U.S. Naval Seabees by attending their reunions.

SPC Justin Ellis

Multiple Launch Rocket Systems Crew Member

When Justin Ellis was interviewed on Jan. 1, 2003, he was currently on active duty in the Army and on leave at home in Cedarburg. He was preparing to return back to his base in Baben Hausen, Germany, but noted that the return would probably be temporary as he was also awaiting deployment orders for the Middle East.

I was lost out of high school: I didn't want to continue my education and didn't want a dead-end job. My dad had served during Vietnam, and I checked out the Armed Forces. I decided the Army was for me. I talked to the recruiter and the job sounded interesting - I could get paid to blow stuff up. I also received a \$20,000 enlistment bonus which I will probably use for Internet schooling.

Basic training was a joke. I thought it was easy because you didn't have to think for yourself. I didn't go into the Army in shape, but I didn't go in out of shape either. I did okay, though.

I was one of eight people who volunteered to go to Germany after basic training. I am stationed at the second or third smallest military installation in the world but my wife was able to come with me. In fact, our daughter was born in Germany so she has dual citizenship. My wife and I don't particularly care for the German people, whom I think are very mean. I do, however, like doner kababs, which are like German gyros with pork and cole slaw. Beer is also very cheap. Germany reminds me a lot of Wisconsin before it developed. It's pure country.

I work a regular nine-to-five shift as part of a MLRS crew. We do a lot of training and live fires to keep our skills up. We're the most lethal force in the world. We have a range of 11 to 300 km, so we're going to Kuwait to fire into Iraq. We've been told to expect the unexpected and we've been doing a lot of chemical training.

We also have some fun. We have cadets who come from West Point and they are like teenagers who aren't even in the military. They are required to spend time out in the "real" military. During our 2000 field casualty evacuation procedures, we taped our cadet to a cot and up-ended him in our motor pool. We did eventually cut him down.

We don't get a whole lot of visitors, though we have had a lot of general-als come through. We're supposed to be impressed by it. Once we had a general come out while we were training in the field, and we had to polish everything up, even fix the ruts that our vehicles had made in the mud. I remember General Wallace came through and made a big show of putting on one of our crew member's helmets. The worst thing about it was that after General Wallace left, he couldn't get the smell of Ben Gay out of his helmet.

I have been pulling quite a bit of guard duty since 9/11, which we think is ridiculous considering that we are at Baben Hausen. When the terrorist attacks happened, it was about 5 p.m. and I was standing in our battery's day room. I was about to go home and I had to check IDs at the door for six hours. We ended up locked and cocked, but it was pretty pointless because 90 percent of soldiers have never heard of us. We have one brigade, one battalion and three support companies.

My mother-in-law was visiting and had landed on September 10, so she was stuck in Germany. They weren't letting any civilian flights take off, and my wife ended up flying back to the States with her when the ban was lifted. We still haven't had anything on base though there have been minor incidents in Germany like car bombs. One woman told her friend not to come to work in Heidelberg and after they investigated, they found that her boyfriend had Napalm in his apartment.

I am applying to become a warrant officer, and I'd eventually like to become a helicopter pilot in Delta Force. I don't think I would've chosen my original MOS if I had known more about it, but hey, you make your bed, you sleep in it. I got the hoo-hah description and bought it. I'm excited about the change and pretty optimistic for my chances. It's more dangerous, but I've always felt that if God wants to take me, he'll take me regardless of what I'm doing. It pays really well and I will be able to retire when I'm still quite young. I'll be able to go home, spend time with my wife and pay my bills.

I think the USA is overprotected right now. If it takes a military person who is defending our country three hours to get through airport security, that's overprotection. I don't think most American citizens realize how well they are protected. I also don't think it would hurt a lot of young kids who are lost, who are hanging out in bowling alleys and working dead-end jobs to go in the military. You get to see the world and do cool things you'd never get to do if you stayed at home.

Justin returned home safely after his deployment to the Middle East.



Justin Ellis during basic training, 2000.

Navy Nurse during World War II

After finishing high school and spending a year at a vocational school, Milwaukee native Florence Fank went into nurses training at what was then known as Lutheran Hospital. After finishing her three years of training, she worked in a doctor's office. That was where she was working when she joined the Navy.

They were short of nurses at that time during World War II, so another nurse and I decided to enlist in the Navy. We were sent to Great Lakes for our training. The women trained separate from the men. We actually didn't get a lot of training because we were already nurses. We did a little marching, but not a lot. I went in as an officer, as ensign.



Florence had already trained as a civilian nurse before she served in the Navy from November 1943 until April 1946. After she returned to Milwaukee, she worked in the delivery room at Lutheran Hospital. She married her husband in September 1947 and left the profession until her youngest child was in school. Florence's husband owned the Grafton Printer.



The first Christmas after I went in I ended up in the hospital with a cold. I'll never forget it. My treatment was very similar to "take two aspirins and call me in the morning."

We also worked there for awhile - I worked in what was known as a survey board, more or less. Young men that had things happen to them in the service would come back and stay there before they were discharged. The survey board would interview them and straighten things out.

I then received orders to go to San Diego, to the Marine base. That was very interesting, too. It was a long train ride. I was able to travel with the same nurse I had enlisted with back in Milwaukee. When we got to San Diego, there was no housing available for us so we stayed in a private home. This lady had this great big private home and there were quite a few nurses who stayed with her. We took the streetcar to the Marine base every day. They were building a residence for us.

The base was where they trained young men to go overseas. I was working in a dispensary for the women Marines, but there was also a clinic/hospital for Marines who had come back. I didn't treat anyone who had been seriously injured. It was more illnesses than anything else.

I also ended up being a patient when I was stationed in San Diego. I had my tonsils out at the Marine base. It was done under local anesthetic - I sat up in a chair while it was done. I didn't have any complications though, but I did go out to eat

shortly thereafter. I couldn't believe that my throat didn't hurt after I went out that night.

My days were very similar to what they probably are now. I would start at 7 a.m. and work until 3:30 p.m. or 4 p.m. For entertainment, we would go out to eat or go to the Officers' Club for a drink. I can remember the day the war ended we all went to the Officers' Club. It was so packed that we were standing way in the back and then they would pass the drinks to us.

Then I received orders for a hospital ship. When we were ready to board, we found out the ship was being decommissioned. They did have us stay on there, but it was only for two nights and I received overseas pay! We had to stay in San Francisco for our next orders and I was there about two weeks. We stayed in very fancy hotels on Nob Hill and we had to report every day to see if our orders had arrived. When my orders arrived, I found out I was going back to Great Lakes.

But once I reported to Great Lakes, I received orders that stated I had to go to Brooklyn, N.Y. By then, however, I think the war was over, though I still reported. I was on the train over New Year's and I got there and worked in a hospital and private duty at Johns Hopkins. One of the officers was having surgery and I was to be his private nurse. When I arrived, he was in surgery so I didn't meet him until after it was finished. Every day I had to travel from Brooklyn to the hospital to take care of him.

When the war did end, I was supposed to be discharged and was sent back to Great Lakes, where I was indeed discharged. My friend that had enlisted with me stayed in San Diego after the war and married someone she had met, but I returned home.

Earl Farmer

As told to Vicki Schanen

Vehicle Maintenance in the Air Force

Milwaukee native Earl Farmer graduated from Milwaukee's Boys Tech and had started working for the Tractor Division of Allis Chalmers when he received his letter from Washington, D.C. He initially enlisted for four years, and re-enlisted four more times before ultimately retiring from the Air Force.

I wanted to go in the Navy because I'd seen all the people walking around Milwaukee in their Navy uniforms, but I couldn't get in because they were all filled up. I was sent to Lackland, AFB for training and then went off to tech school in Kentucky with the 101st Airborne Division. I learned to be an automotive mechanic.

When I finished training, I was sent to Oscoda Air Force Base in northern Michigan. At that time, it was part of the Air Defense. My job was in the vehicle maintenance facility and I also received extra training in refueling maintenance. While I was there, we also opened a new base at Kinross, Mich.

Within two years, I was reassigned to Germany, where I served for the next three years as a vehicle mechanic. I wound up in Wiesbaden, Germany and was assigned to the 1st Radio Relay Squadron (1RR), which originated as part of the Army during World War II. In 1947, when the Army Air Corps became its own entity, we became the first unit. Even to this day, we still have a reunion every year.

I had normal days of work on a maintenance team. We had radio sites all over Germany. We'd service the equipment and the vehicles. We had a squadron mascot - Rodney, a wirehaired terrier - and he would go on the site runs with us. We'd stop and have dinner at the gasthauses and Rodney always sat down with us on a chair and ate, too. He'd get just as drunk as we did; he loved German beer.

After work, I'd come home, change my clothes and chase the girls all over Germany. Though... we were still occupational forces, so we had to watch what we did.

Because my enlistment was up, I returned to the States. It wasn't until we were about to be reassigned that they started talking to us about staying in. I don't know why I did it, but I re-enlisted. That was 1955, and jobs were still a little bit tight. I was sent to Patrick Air Force Base in Florida for a short time before getting a four-year assignment to Ladd Air Force Base in Fairbanks, Alaska. I was single and young, so I took my little suntanned body up to Alaska. When I got there, it wasn't even a state yet!

It was a really unique assignment. All my life, nothing else has compared. We had to learn to live and work in subzero weather. We'd get in trouble for running in the super sub-zero weather because we ran the risk of frostbiting our lungs. We went out to some pretty remote sites in Alaska, sometimes in bush planes.

I had been re-assigned to Michigan at the time, to Wurthsmith Air Force Base SAC. It was there where I met my wife, Marilyn. I met her on a blind date! I met her in July and married her in November of the same year. I was reassigned in 1965 to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, though I didn't go because I was redlined (I had a family). What's interesting is that the boy who took my place decided to go out and get drunk before the plane left and he ended up missing his flight. What's even more interesting is that fully loaded flight - which would have also been the one that my wife and I would have taken - crashed at Clark Air Field with no survivors.

My next assignment was to a remote base in Alaska. It was so cold up there that the thermometers were made of alcohol, not mercury. Mercury freezes faster than alcohol and if the alcohol freezes, then that's trouble!

I went to Biloxi, Miss. in 1966, and my wife joined me. I started training to become a helicopter pilot, but that also meant I'd wind up in 'Nam, where the life expectancy of a chopper pilot was about 65 seconds. Because of my eyes, which weren't strong enough without my glasses, I didn't qualify. I went on for different training, and my wife and I went on to my new assignment in England.

My enlistment wasn't up when I was in England, but I requested retirement at 20 years, which you can do. We came back to the States and relocated to Florida. We lived there for 14 years before returning to Wisconsin.



Earl served with the Air Force from April 27, 1951 until May 30, 1971. Here he is in 1951.

Raymond Fischer As told to Vicki Schanen

Served in the Army Infantry during the Korean War

Ray Fischer grew up as a farm kid in the Town of Jackson. He attended school through eighth grade in a one-room schoolhouse and then helped his father out on the farm until he was drafted into the Army.

I was deferred a few times before I was drafted at the age of 22. My number was up. There were many other boys who were farmers that were also drafted. I had sour feelings about being drafted and it was a hardship for my dad. He even tried to get the Red Cross involved. Ultimately, my dad had to downsize the farm.

I had two weeks of leave at home after basic training and I had been trained to be in the infantry. They asked me where I'd like to go: Germany or Korea. I put down Germany and they sent me to Korea.



Ray served with the Army from December 1952 until December 1954. Here he is in Japan during his last year of service.

off - we always had to be ready to go.

I remember they had me on a flame thrower for awhile, too. That was just suicide. You'd run up to some bunker and shoot in there. It would disintegrate the bunker. But one bullet, and I'd have been gone. You had two tanks of fuel on your back. Normally, I carried a M-1 with eight rounds. We carried about eight to 10 clips.

We had bunkers that we lived in. You were lucky to sleep four hours, and most of the time we didn't get that. We slept on the ground, but the lucky guys had rubber air mattress, but they were often flat because they had holes in them. I remember I wrote home to my ma and asked her to send me some rubber tire patches to patch mine. Some guys found that out - "Hey, buddy, can you fix mine?" - so I had to write home for more patches.

The bunkers were built up with ground and sand with sandbags on the roof. There were trenches, too. Some of the bunkers also had machine guns in them. You could hear the rounds coming in - they would whistle - and you almost knew where they would go. I heard rounds coming toward our bunker and I said, "I'm getting the hell out of here!" I ran one way, my buddy ran the other and sure enough, the round went right in our little bunker and there was nothing left of it.

I distinctly remember July 27, 1953. That was the cease fire, but that was the day I almost got it. We were supposed to move back 200 meters, which we did. But I don't think North Korea did. They were throwing in their stuff - I don't know if they were trying to get rid of it - and I said to my buddy, "They almost seem to be zeroing in on us." He agreed and I said, "I'm not comfortable in here. I think I'm going to go into that fox hole."

In the Army, there's the buddy system and he was my buddy. So, he followed me into the other fox hole. Maybe five minutes later the foxhole I had been in was about 10 times bigger. It had really been time to move.

After the cease fire we still had to patrol the Demilitarized Zone and I was on there for a long time. They're still patrolling that even now. After awhile, I had been pulled back a bit but stayed on alert. I spent one year, three months and 15 days in Korea.

It took us 17 days to get from Ft. Lewis, Wash., to Korea on the USS General W.M. Black. The first five days I didn't get any further than my berth to the garbage can. It was rough going over. After that, though there wasn't much to do. The five of us who had gone in together from Jackson played a lot of cards on the way over, but once we got to Inchon, we were separated. I think they did that on purpose.

We went right to the front line as replacements. Usually mornings, about 4 a.m. or so, things would start to taper down. We'd get a little rest during the day. Most of the time the fighting went on at night. I know we came up off of patrol at night one time and they must have spotted us. You could see the bullets hitting the ground in front of you and you just knew that at any second one was going to come up the back of you. It was a terrible day. We experienced about two months of heavy fighting when we first arrived.

We had chow down the hill behind us. Sometimes they were so far down the hill that you'd go and eat and by the time you walked back up the hill, you'd be hungry again. Sometimes the chow lines were a half to a quarter-mile away from us. And if it was really too far, the jeeps would bring us food and serve it. If there was heavy fighting, then you had to rely on your little packs of C rations. I kept a spoon on my belt, but most of the time you just ate with your hands.

I also went about a month without a shower at one point. Your stockings could stand up by themselves. We also never took our boots

Lt. Col. Leone Garrett, ret.

Air Force Nurse

Belgium native Leone Garrett served with the United States Air Force Nurse Corps from May 1963 until May 1983. Wanting new opportunities and adventures after 10 years of civilian nursing in Milwaukee, she decided to become a military nurse.

My oldest brother had been in the Air Corps during World War II and I'd always had a yen for the Air Force. The only other branch I would have considered was the Navy, and that was because I liked their uniforms. I did have an interview with a Naval nurse before going to Chicago to interview with an Air Force nurse. That was when I decided it was meant for me.

I also found out that I only had to sign up for two years. I thought, "What the heck? If I don't like it, I can just get out." I entered in 1963 - I was sworn in in April and my first assignment came in May for Goodfellow AFB in San Angelo, Texas. Before I left, though, I had a three-week indoctrination in Alabama, which was an introduction to the Air Force. We learned the rules and regulations, how to salute and how to march. Would you believe that we nurses won the parade? We did.

Goodfellow AFB had a small hospital, an old ramp-type hospital that had been popular during the Second World War. This was an old wooden structure that had been there all those years. I was the only nurse in the operating room and I had three corpsmen with me and one surgeon who had just completed a one-year residency. We only did minor surgery - appendectomy, gall bladder removals and hernia repairs - but nothing beyond that. Anything else would have been beyond the scope of not only the surgeon, but also the operating room itself.

After I'd been at Goodfellow for about 10 months or so, I was asked if I'd want to become a career reserve officer. I said the only way I would do that was if they would send me to flight nursing school and then go to Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. I had wanted to go to Alaska ever since I graduated from nursing school. I love cold weather and I thought it would be a wonderful adventure. They wanted me to stay, I guess, because I did.

In the summer of 1964, I arrived at Elmendorf. There were four operating rooms; there was a charge nurse, another nurse and myself. We had orthopedic surgeons, general surgeons and a neurosurgeon that would come from town. He was the only neurosurgeon in Alaska and he would come to our hospital when we needed him.

I met up with another nurse and we used to do things together. We'd go to the Officers' Club where all the flyboys went. Unfortunately, most of them were married. You could tell because they'd have a white ring around their fingers where their wedding rings were supposed to be! We decided after going to the "O-Club" for awhile that we'd had enough of that, so we started going into town. One couple took me under their wing and they ended up introducing me to my future husband, Walter.

When I finished my bachelor's degree at Washington University in St. Louis in 1969, I wanted to go back to Alaska, but operating room nurses were in short supply in the Lower 48. I found out I could go back up to Elmendorf as a general duty nurse working on a men's surgical unit. Working in a hospital is different than other occupations in the military. It was a lot like being a civilian. I can't give you any gory, wonderful things that happened. It was just a nice job to have.

After completing a course in respiratory therapy and passing oral and written examinations, I entered this field. I married Walter in 1971. After serving five years at Almedorf AFB, I had to transfer because it was the maximum time allowed military personnel. Walter stayed because of his job as a civil engineer for the State Department of Transportation. We ended up seeing each other twice a year for the next few years.

My next assignment took me to the hyperbaric chamber at Brooks Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. Brooks was moving from providing emergency services for the bends to a full-time operation for treating people who needed oxygen for tissues that weren't healing well. This was a new method of treatment. We had to learn how to dive ourselves (the patients couldn't dive on their own because there was a chance they'd need medical care), doing rapid diving to 120 feet.

After 13 months at Brooks, in 1977 I attended the University of California - San Francisco and graduated with a master's degree in nursing. I was then assigned to Shepherd AFB in Wichita Falls, Texas where another nurse and I wrote and taught a critical care nursing course for Air Force nurses.

I returned to Elmendorf AFB in 1980 and life with my husband. I was by now a Lieutenant Colonel and my assignment was assistant chief nurse of the hospital. I retired with this rank in 1983. Twenty years was the maximum allowed for career Reserve officers, but 30 years of full-time, non-stop nursing were enough for me.

Deanna Heiser Gehrke As told to Vicki Schanen

Career Counselor with the 88th Regional Readiness Command

Deanna Heiser Gehrke is one of two siblings from her family who have served in the military. Her father [page 55] also served in Vietnam. With this family tradition, it's no surprise that she would join the Army Reserves when she was 20 and a sophomore at UW-Milwaukee in 1995.

I decided to join the Reserves for a number of reasons. First, it was because my dad had served in the Vietnam and I also felt it was something I could do for my country. I also joined for the financial benefits that I could use in going to school. My commitment was six years active reserves and then two years inactive. I enlisted as a mechanic, but I ended up being part of an ordinance company. I looked at the commitment and the benefits available and then decided to try one of the jobs that offered what I was looking for.

I joined the Reserves in December 1995 and left for basic training in January 1996. I was sent to



Deanna has served with the Army Reserves since 1995.

Ft. Jackson, S.C., for eight weeks of training and then I had AIT there as well for mechanics training. I was the only female in my class and one of three or four total. It was definitely a male-dominated job. They taught the class as if you had some mechanical background, which I didn't. We were trained to troubleshoot vehicles and do preventative maintenance. Each of us had gigantic toolboxes, which I had a hard time lifting. But overall I did well.

The advice I received from Mandi Gramoll (page 84) was to just do what I was told and try not to let the drill sergeants know your name. I did exactly what I was told and that led me to be in charge as the platoon sergeant from the second week on until the end.

It was a pretty difficult adjustment for me. I'd never really been away from my family and we are very close. It was challenging - very structured and strict - but I'd definitely do it again.

After I finished my training, I returned home. I drilled one weekend a month with the 826th Ordinance Company Detachment. There was a detachment in Milwaukee and one in Rockford, though our company was based in Madison. I also went back to college in the fall when I returned from AIT. After a few years, when they moved all the mechanics to Madison, I also reclassified as an ammunitions specialist.

I stayed with the 826th for seven of my eight years and then I was with the 961st Engineering Battalion for one year. I changed units when I was promoted and then I was able to return to the 826th in 2002. That was also the year that we were mobilized in January in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. We spent six months at Ft. McCoy. They were going to send us over three times - we were supposed to go to Jordan, then Kuwait, then Iraq. We were packed to go the first time, but they didn't have enough seats on the plane. We ended up sending the commander and three other soldiers to prepare. I stayed back and ran the platoon because I was the highest ranking person. We kept getting word from them that there just wasn't the work over there for us. Our commander and the soldiers returned home six months later and we were demobilized.

After we got off of mobilization I got pregnant, and we decided that I would switch into a different job. I became a career counselor for the 88th Regional Readiness Command. I do retention for the 88th in Southeastern Wisconsin. We re-enlist people, talk to them about their benefits and try to solve any problems they may encounter. When soldiers come off of mobilization, we'll sit down and get a feel for where they are so we can retain our force. I'm still a reservist, but there are active Guard and Reserve members who do my job. I will come on during the drill weekends and help them, and the 826th is one of my units. In my civilian life, I'm an enrollment counselor with Cardinal Stritch University, which is similar to what I do in my Reserve life.

I drilled my six years; instead of going inactive, I decided to continue drilling. I stayed with my unit and extended for a year and now an additional two years. You can only extend under certain rules for so long. Now I'm an E-6 and will have 11 years in, so when I am up again, I would have to re-enlist indefinitely, and because we want to expand our family, I haven't made a decision as to what I will do.

Field Artillery Lieutenant in the Army National Guard

Like Deanna, military service runs in Randy's family. His father retired as a Command Sergeant Major in the Army National Guard in 2003 and his younger brother current serves in a Black Hawk unit with the Army National Guard. Randy joined the Reserves in 1998 while he was working at Ft. McCoy's Challenge Academy, a program for at-risk youths.

I was in the ROTC program when I was in college and opted not to continue - the commitment at that time was four years of active duty after college. I wanted to explore the world on my own terms instead of the military's terms. My dad didn't push me into ROTC, but he did encourage me in thinking about becoming an officer because of the benefits. The job I was doing was quasi-military anyway, and I was living on a military post, so I really did get a sense of what military life was like. I chose the Reserves because Deanna was in the Reserves (we were dating at the time) and I thought I'd rather be in a federal system that had better funding. I decided to go into physical therapy, which the Reserves offered as an MOS.

Like Deanna, I was sent to Ft. Jackson, S.C. for basic training in March 1998. Because of what I did at Ft. McCoy, I had a pretty good appreciation for what was going on. I was ahead of the game and actually pretty relaxed about it. I was sent to Ft. Sam Houston in Texas for my AIT and then to Ft. Knox, Ky., to do a 10 - week clinical. All total, I had 54 weeks of training.

When I finished, I could have tested to become a physical therapy assistant in civilian life, but I didn't pursue it.

When I returned home, I started doing the once a month drills with two weeks in the summer. During drill weekends, we worked in

hospitals on Sundays. I didn't really use my physical therapy skills as much as my EMT skills working in emergency rooms. On Saturdays, we would do paper work or additional medical training with the nurses.

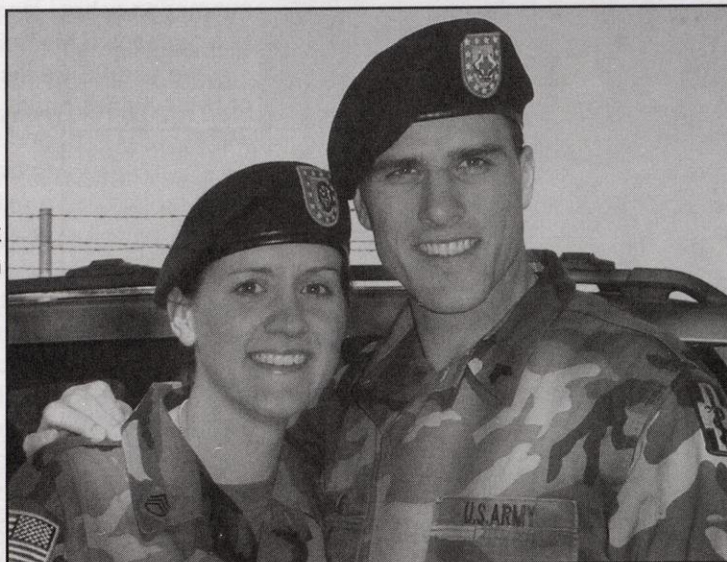
The first summer I was back in Wisconsin, I was not required to do annual training because I had completed so much active-duty time during training. In Summer 2001, we were ready to go to Guiana on a mission for two weeks. There were 30 of us going down as EMTs on a mission to help the village people get once-a-year medical care. We were going to leave on Saturday and that Thursday they cancelled our mission because their government wouldn't comply with our security requirements. I ended up going to Ft. McCoy and doing additional training.

I got mobilized three weeks after Deanna and we were both at Ft. McCoy in different units. We did see each other - we had to stay in separate barracks, though. We did get to see each other on the weekends and at night because our training was sustained. We were also demobilized, just like Deanna's company.

After five-plus years on the enlisted side, I decided I wanted to go to the officer side. I had the opportunity to go to Officer Candidate School in Summer 2003. I was able to get commissioned at that point. I had a choice of what branch I could choose from, but it is dictated by what your state has. Wisconsin is one of the larger states for artillery branch service, so I moved from physical therapy to artillery.

My responsibilities as an officer are quite a bit different than when I was enlisted. I am the only lieutenant in my unit, so when we drill at home, I'm the "XO" - the second in charge. I work with the senior NCOs (Non-commissioned officers) and make sure they have a game plan for their guys. I do a lot of planning. When were in the field, my role changes a bit. I become a safety and tactical officer. For example, if we're shooting rounds, I'll make sure our training is safely completed.

I've been an officer for almost two years. I value a lot of my enlistment experience because I understand where the soldiers are coming from. Sometimes I find that I want to act like an NCO, but then I have to draw the line so I don't step on their toes. I like to interact and be a teacher, but that's the responsibility of the NCOs. I think what I've learned and experienced is also helping me professionally. And I plan to make a career out of the Army National Guard.



Randy served with the U.S. Army Reserves from 1998 until 2003 and continued serving with the Army National Guard in 2003.

Don Gerth

Naval Aviation and Army Reserves

In 1950, Pennsylvania native Don Gerth had been working in a knitting mill and regularly checking the draft board at the courthouse in Reading, Pa. When he saw that his draft number was inching ever-closer to the top of the list, he decided the time was right to enlist in the Navy.

I always admired the Naval Aviation guys during World War II and a friend of mine had gone into Naval Aviation a few years earlier when we'd both graduated from high school. I enlisted in October 1950 and was sent off to Great Lakes Naval Training Center in Illinois. It was the first time I'd been in the Midwest and I found it to be quite cold and snowy. We had snow in Pennsylvania, but it only seemed to stick around for a few days.

When we finished training, nobody received leave. Most of the guys were sent directly to California because they were filling up the ships because of Korea. Only three of us were sent on to "A" School: One went to submarine school, one went on to the medic school and I was sent on to air school in Memphis.



(above) Don in Guam, 1952. Note the Quonset huts in the back, which was where he lived. (right) The bulk of Don's military career was served with the Army Reserve's 84th Division in Milwaukee, photo circa late 1980s.



We had 28 weeks of classroom instruction and then eight weeks of flying planes out of Memphis. We flew along the Mississippi River and we also had permission from some of the airlines to track their civilian airplanes. We would follow about a mile behind them and track them as if we were going to shoot them down.

After that, and still without a chance for leave, I went on to Naval Air Station San Diego for three more months of training. I learned more about radar and radio operation.

I finally received orders. I had hoped I could get stationed somewhere on the East Coast so I could be closer to my mother and to home, but as it usually happens in the military, I was sent in the opposite direction: The South Pacific.

We spent a lot of time on patrols. We would do things like drop Sonabuys, which were these cylinders full of electronics. When they were in the water, they'd send out "pings" like sonar, which would hit anything metal. We knew where the American submarines were, so when we'd get a ping back from one that we didn't recognize, we'd drop another Sonabuoy and triangulate to find out where the enemy submarine was. We would typically fly about 12-14 hours in one day and then have the next day off or only work a half day.

I spent about a month in Guam and then volunteered to go to the Philippines. I thought it would be better than Guam, which it was. While I was there, I joined the Manila Hotel, which was where MacArthur stayed before World War II. They had a beautiful swimming pool and bar, so I spent quite a bit of time.

In the Philippines, I also worked part-time in communications. The 7th Fleet was in the area and we would communicate with other planes in identifying where the enemy was and what it was doing. In 1952, we were also having problems with the communist "Hucks" (Huck was part of a much longer name that they had). They were a cause of a lot of unrest, and they wanted to take over. During the monsoons the rain would come down so hard that when the light hit it, it would turn into a mirror. That's when they'd try and get into our ammunition dump at Sangley Point. That was the only time I ever shot at someone.

I spent 26 months overseas before I returned to the States, which was also the first time I was able to go home. I remember coming back from Guam and stopping in Hawaii and really realizing we were back in civilization as I knew it: Paved sidewalks, being able to watch a movie with a roof over your head, even the fact that things were clean. My enlistment was just about up and while they offered me a promotion to stay in, I declined because I wanted to go to the Milwaukee School of Engineering, which is how I ended up here in Cedarburg. Because I only had four months left, they made me the head NCO at the post office at the San Diego NAS.

My commitment was completely fulfilled at that point, but I decided to join the Army Reserves when I was 42. The Naval Reserves were too far away and, because of my electronics background and education, the Army Reserves was interested in me. That was when Vietnam was winding down and they needed people. They kicked me out when I was 60, but I did get a call from St. Louis when Desert Storm happened. The guy on the phone said, "Hey 'Top,' would you like to go for one last spin?" I told them I wouldn't volunteer, but if they'd cut orders for me, I would go. As it turned out, they found other guys to go.

Ed Gnutow

C-130 Aircraft Mechanic

Ed Gnutow was actually born in Germany and came to America as a child in 1961. Enlisting in the Air Force not only gave him the opportunity to work on airplanes, but to return temporarily to his native homeland.

I graduated from Sheboygan High School in 1973 and spent a few months working before I decided to enlist in the military. I looked at all the branches before making my decision, and I chose the Air Force. I thought it offered the best educational opportunities and the ability to go overseas, which is what I wanted to do. I also wanted to get into aircraft mechanics, and the Air Force was a logical choice.

I was sent to basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. I was young and in good shape, so I found it to be very easy. Our basic training isn't like that of the Army in that we never marched around with guns. In fact, I think I only touched an M-16 once while I was in basic. We did do a lot of marching and exercising though. I knew that once basic was over I was going to be doing something mechanical, but I didn't know what I would specialize in. I did my advance training at Wichita Falls, Texas. I didn't find the training particularly hard, but if you didn't pay attention you'd be lost.

I ended up becoming an aircraft mechanic for the C-130 Hercules and was first stationed in Ft. Walton Beach, Fla., which is in the panhandle near Pensacola. Our job required us to fly a lot, which was great because I was fascinated with planes. We were basically like gas station attendants for the planes, but we'd also fly along with the crew in case something needed to be fixed. We worked regular eight-hour shifts, and I was assigned to first shift, 7 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

The six planes that we were assigned to were part of the 55th Rescue and Recovery operation, and part of our job was a little unusual. In addition to our regular shift work, we would also be on call to go out on the rescue and recovery missions off of the coast. Our job was to act as spotters, and we'd sit there with binoculars and look for the people who were in trouble: accidents, running out of gas, someone getting sick at sea, etc.

We went out as far as a few hundred miles off shore, and though I did it for 1 1/2 years, I never really became accustomed to the job. Sometimes the things we would see weren't so nice, such as when we'd find the accident and there would be sharks circling in the water.

In 1975, I received orders to go to Rhine-main, Germany, but right after I received them, they were cancelled. I found out it had to do with my being born in Germany, and I had to go before a Federal judge in Florida before they were reinstated. My parents are actually from Russia, the part that was occupied by Germany after World War I. When World War II broke out, my dad was required to be in the German army (if he'd tried to go back to Russia, the Russians would've killed him). After the war, my parents lived in Straubing and then came to America with my sisters and me. While we didn't have family in Germany, I knew that if I could get stationed there, my parents would come over and we'd spend some time seeing the sights and visiting friends, which they did do.

When I was at Rhine-main Air Base in Frankfurt, I continued working on the C-130s, but I was assigned to the eight "Blackbird" airplanes, a special outfit. We had eight planes, and there was always one in the air at night over Berlin taking pictures. They would take off before dark each night and make the hour-and-a-half or so flight to Berlin. The belly of the C-130 would slide open and they'd bring the cameras down. As soon as that one would take off, we'd get the next plane ready. I actually worked third shift, which was my favorite shift because there wasn't any brass around so we didn't have to salute. We were also a good group of friends.

I really didn't have it bad in the Air Force. I lived in nice barracks and the food was good. I never had to pull guard duty and I didn't carry a gun. I did have time to travel, and I went to England as part of some NATO war games and later made it to Greece. I spoke German, so I could understand the people. In a lot of the places, they didn't like the Americans but they did like our money. I had a car while I was there - a German Ford Taunis - and I received a gas ration card because gas was so expensive. They also gave us ration cards for four cartons of cigarettes and four bottles of booze every month. There was a huge black market in Germany for hard liquor.

I enjoyed my time in the Air Force, and even though they tried to get me to re-enlist, I didn't. Now I could kick myself in the butt for not staying in, but I wanted to come home. I did join the 440th Airlift Wing at Mitchell Field for a few years after I came home, but I'm no longer active.



By the time his tour of duty was up, Ed had visited all three destinations on his "dream sheet": Germany, England and Italy.

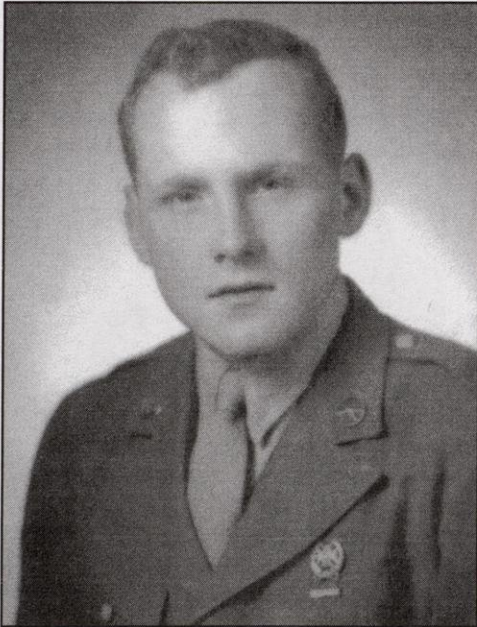
Austin Goodrich

World War II Infantry Soldier

I don't think much about World War II, even though it is now more than 60 years since it ended. I'm just comforted to know that I had some wee small part in its outcome.

Sometimes events of the past are either reduced to insignificance by people born after them or enlarged beyond recognition by nostalgic reminiscences. Still, every once in awhile, I can hear that cry in the woods high on a ridge overlooking the town of Hitchenback in the Ruhr Valley.

Our unit had marched all day and was looking forward to some rest when the order came down: We would soon take part in our first large-scale night attack. We were to wait in the woods above the village while our artillery shelled the town.



Austin served as an infantry soldier in Europe.

At first, the whining sound of shells passing overhead was largely ignored. But gradually the shells came closer to the tops of the pine trees where we waited, until there was only a split second between the whining sound and the explosion.

Then there was no interval at all, and we were under the worst kind of friendly fire: tree bursts that spewed down jagged shreds of steel in sweeping arcs of destruction. Nobody was standing or sitting now - it was time to dig a hole in the ground and hide. At the base of a large tree, I pawed at the ground, sending pine needles flying. The explosions overhead got so intense that individual bursts merged into an earsplitting roll of deadly thunder. And I prayed: Oh, God, please make 'em stop. Please God ...

Then, very suddenly, there was a terrible silence. It was over, but no one spoke, and bodies rose up like ghosts from a graveyard. Finally, calls were heard from different parts of the hillside: Medic, over here! Hurry! Help, Medic!

It was then that I heard, through the scattered calls for help, the one cry that has remained with me all these years. The voice was that of PFC Marks, a rifleman in the 3rd Platoon. Like many of us in the 86th, Walter Marks had been slated to go to college when the war interrupted. I remember him as a smiling person with the impish look of

a boy always on the verge of pulling off a great practical joke.

His voice travelled through the woods with a special resonance that overrode the cries for help and the sounds of battle. One word, spoken once. "Mother!"

Curious, I thought. The voice lacked the unmistakable sound of pain, nor did it hold any hint of desperation or sorrow. It was more like a greeting.

When we were finally marching down to take the town, I chanced to see our company medic.

"Did you see Marks back there?"

"Yeah."

"Wounded?"

"No, killed."

"But I heard him call out."

"So did I, but I don't know how."

And on we went to do our duty.

If I had known Marks better, I thought I would try and find his mother when this was over and tell her she was the last thing in her son's heart when he died. But I hadn't even known his first name, and as often happened, I was unable to continue to deal with death consciously - I blocked out the details in all but my worst nightmares.

Some of our old Company K buddies recently got together to celebrate the golden anniversary of our survival. One of them had been a close friend of Marks. I asked him about our fallen friend's last moments and if he heard that call. He had.

"He must've seen his mother in his mind's eye and called out to her," I suggested.

"You know, I've often wondered about that," the friend replied, "because Walter never knew his mother. He had never even seen her."

"How's that?"

"She died in childbirth when she brought him into this world."

Served in the Army Air Corps before and during World War II

Lou Gosewehr grew up on a farm in the Town of Saukville and, after gaining an education in a one-room schoolhouse, did odd jobs after graduating from Port Washington High School in 1932. He was working at Briggs and Stratton when he received his invitation to join the military and served from April 1941 until September 1945.

I didn't think I'd be called up so soon. I went into the Army; I didn't know anything else. I was waiting to see what would happen. We were sent to the Richards Street Armory and our group was divided in half on the first day with half going to the infantry and half to ordinance. By the end of the day, I was on a train to the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. I remember one time they took us on a hike and we got lost. We were out for six hours - we could see the base but we couldn't figure out how to get there. It was supposed to be a one-mile march. After Aberdeen, I was sent for advanced mechanic training in Mississippi.

There was some mix-up after that where I was sent to Oklahoma for one night. Then I was supposed to be sent to South Carolina and that never happened either. I ended up in San Francisco, where we spent our first two nights sleeping on the concrete floor at the Cow Palace, which was a big arena. We then boarded a ship right from there headed for ... we didn't know where!

Oh, did I get seasick. I threw up for four days. I didn't know it at the time, but I get seasick every time I get on a ship. We were on the ocean from January until March zig-zagging without an escort. We saw lights one time and we were told that was Christmas Island, which meant we were way south. It was scary because, at the time, the Japanese had control of everything. There were moments when we would go in circles and they would drop depth bombs because they thought there were submarines nearby.

We pulled into Brisbane, Australia, and the talk then was that we should have landed in the Philippines. So, we went right back on the ship and headed to Melbourne. They didn't know what to do with us so they sent us to Ballarat, Australia and we stayed in private homes for about a week. It was nice. I took a real bath at my home.

We were then sent to Adelaide, where we loaded our equipment on a narrow-gauge railroad. When we hit the end of the railroad at Alice Spring, we formed a truck convoy to Darwin. When we were in Australia, that was also when we were told that we were then in the Army Air Corps.

We went east to Townsville and boarded a ship and we headed to New Guinea, where we ended up in the Markham River Valley. It wasn't as swampy as other parts of New Guinea, which was good because that meant that the mosquitoes weren't as bad. I still took malaria pills every day in the mess hall. But there were ticks in the tall grass, and they could lead to Dengue Fever. I saw one fellow who had Dengue Fever and he just wasted away.

Our job was to handle the bombs and the ammunition, which we would load on the planes. We didn't have a regular schedule; we would work when the planes came in. We worked one whole Christmas night loading planes.

We slept in tents and we ate mutton for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Spam was a treat. Our breakfast "SOS" had mutton in it. Mutton tasted all the same, no matter how they cooked it. Another fellow and myself went hunting one day and we saw a water buffalo. I was the driver, the other guy had the gun. He shot the thing seven times in the head and it kept coming at us in the truck. It got right up to the truck and plopped over. We had fresh meat for a couple days, but we had to share it with Headquarters because they had the refrigeration. The only thing I ever killed the entire time I was in New Guinea: I shot a big old rat with my .45 in my foxhole.

I do remember seeing Joe E. Brown as part of a U.S.O. Show, which was the only one that came through when I was there. We also sometimes had movies. We had a ball team and there was a fellow from the Cleveland Indians who served as our pitcher.

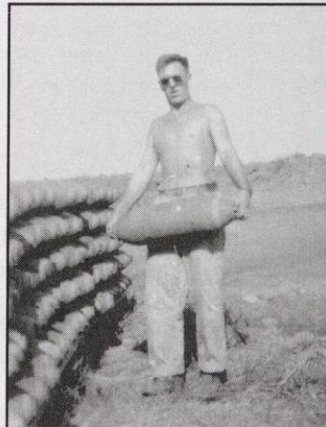
I served in New Guinea until June 1944. The point system cleared the way for my return to the States. I arrived in the States on July 30, 1944, and was assigned to Barksdeme Field, La.

My wife and I still keep in touch with about eight fellows - all from down south - and their wives that I served with during this time.



(above) Lou served with the 71st Squadron, 38th Bombardment Group, 5th Air Force, which flew the B-25 Mitchell Bombers.

(right) Here's Lou lifting a "300-pound bomb" while serving in the Markham River Valley in Central New Guinea.



John Grasse

Spent 11 days in the Navy and then joined the Merchant Marines

At 17, John Grasse left Sister Bay and joined the Navy. Despite having poor vision in his left eye, he was able to fudge his way through the eye exam. It wasn't until he got to Great Lakes that he was caught.

They did the eye test a little differently at Great Lakes, so I couldn't cheat. It was 1944 and the war was still going on hot and heavy so I thought they were not about to lose people that they'd already had shackled in, but after 11 days of this physical exam and that physical exam, they sent me home.

I stayed home until September 1945, which was when I obtained my Ordinary Seaman's papers. My "training" consisted of "raise your right hand" and agreeing not to commit treason, among other things, against the United States. I'd grown up in Door County and when I was a kid, if I had all my chores done, I was allowed to go out with the fishermen. We also had two pictures in our house - one of my Uncle Sable who was a captain on merchant ships and one of my Uncle Arthur, who was a lighthouse keeper in Ludington, Mich. That was enough for me!



John aboard ship in 1944.

I had gone to the steamboat inspector to find out how to get my papers, and he said, "Give me your birth certificate and come back with four passport pictures." When I came back, he offered this bit of advice: If you want to sail in the ocean, head to the East Coast. It's closer and you don't have to hitchhike as far."

It didn't bother me that the average life span of a merchant seaman during the war was about 11 days. They were sinking the ships faster than they could make them. I was pretty hollow headed about it. I was 18 without a brain in my head, but none of the ships I'd sailed on ever sank.

I hitchhiked to New York, where I found out that there were no ships coming in. I was fresh off the Door County manure pile and ended up at the Seamen's Church Institute, which was this big building with bunks three to four high just full of drunk, surly, unhealthy sailors. One would cough and another would yell, "Die, you bastard!"

I quickly found out that there was no point in staying there, so I hitched a ride with Rudy's Trucking to Boston. The truck had a burned-out clutch and I rode in the back. We got to the top of a hill and I said, "T'hell with

this" and jumped off. A semi came along - loaded with mules - and the driver offered me a ride ... but I had to ride with the mules.

After my experience in New York at the Seamen's Church Institute, I spent the first night in an alley. But I did obtain my first job - I would report to the SS Kokomo Victory as a mess boy for the crew. I'd serve and clean up and on alternate days, the pantryman and I would trade off, so I'd wash dishes. It was a dull job.

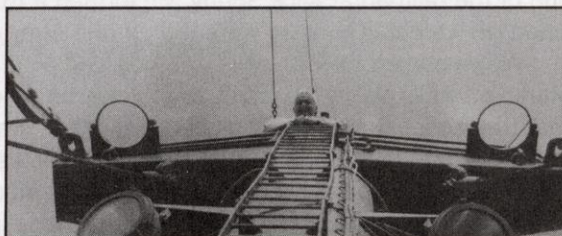
I found the Kokomo Victory and climbed up the gang plank. I asked someone, "Where's the captain?" He pointed up. So, I went up to the bridge and opened the door. I said, "Captain, I'm the mess boy." He turned and looked at me and said, "Get the hell out of here!" Like I said, I was pretty hollow headed.

Our job was to go back and forth to Europe and we were bringing the troops home. I felt so sorry for them. They were below deck in bunks five to six high. The guy on the top would throw up and it would hit the bunks and then the floor. Our pigs back home on the farm had it better than they did. I remember things being so war torn when we'd get into the European ports. LeHavre, France was just six to eight blocks of rubble from the shore. It looked like it had been bulldozed.

I didn't like working in the mess and, after I left the Kokomo Victory, I always worked on deck. I did whatever needed to be done - I'd steer, chip paint, splice line, scrub down the deck with fish oil, which is really a lovely job because the oil really stinks.

My last tour in 1948 was with the Fall River Navigation Company. I did something that even a lot of Merchant Marines don't get a chance to do. I made a trip 1 1/2 times around the world aboard a round-bottom, under-powered liberty ship with miserable steering. It took eight months to complete.

After he finished his life on the sea, John moved to Alaska where he developed a thriving garbage collection business and ran for governor of Alaska. He now lives in Mequon.



Old habits die hard. In 1998, John scaled this ladder and peaked down from this liberty ship's crow's nest.

Harold "Poly" Habich

As remembered by his daughter,
Mary Habich Gramoll

Mechanic during World War II

My father, Poly Habich, served with the Army from April 20, 1945 until November 30, 1946. He was quite a chubby little baby and received his nickname - Poly - as a baby and it continued with him throughout his entire life. As far as we're aware, he was the first person from his family to serve in the military.

He lived in Grafton his entire life and graduated from Grafton High School. He was working at Grob Inc. as a machinist and did a variety of jobs, including the supervision of 12 women at Grob. The women were working because most of the men were away from home serving during the war. Grob was also quite busy in support of the war effort.

My father received a draft notice while he was working at Grob, dated February 11, 1944. It says, "You are hereby directed to report for pre-induction physical examination at the courthouse in Port Washington at 5:50 a.m. on the 16th of February, 1944." At the time, my father was 30 years old and he hadn't volunteered to serve. He may have been drafted because of the skills he had developed while working at Grob.

He was actually inducted on April 20, 1945. He entered basic training after that. He graduated from machinist training at the Atlanta Ordnance Depot in Atlanta, Ga. in September 1945.

During this time, my mother worked as a civilian seamstress in Atlanta in support of the war effort. She was released from duty around the time that he completed his training in Georgia. Her release papers note that she was let go because she was leaving the state. Because my father left the United States and was shipped overseas on November 20, 1945, she returned to Grafton. He arrived in Saipan on December 6.

My father was sent to Saipan, where he served with the 24th Air Depot Group in Saipan, Marianas Islands. At that time he operated a caterpillar with hoist attachment; loaded bombs on trucks with a boom attachment; serviced, lubed and cleaned vehicles and made minor repairs on vehicles. He also had a military driver's license.

I have been told that he wrote daily letters to my mother - which I have not been able to locate - but I do have a letter he wrote to one of his younger sisters, Lil, on December 11, 1945. It starts: *Dear Lil, I believe this is the first letter I'm writing to you since I'm in the Army. Well, it's not that I didn't want to write you. But when I ever send a letter to anyone back there, I usually mean it for everybody so I hope they pass them around. I usually manage to write a couple of letters every day: One to Bernice [Mary's mother] and one or two to the rest of you. I got a letter from Bernice today and she mentioned that Ray [Lil's husband in the Navy] still expected to be home by Christmas. That came as sort of a surprise because I haven't heard anything about Ray since I left the States...*

He goes on to say: *"It won't seem much like Christmas over here with summer weather. Maybe it's good that way because I won't miss it so much. I'm beginning to think this coming overseas is a lot of s-blank-blank-blank. We've been here almost a week now and haven't been assigned yet. We are either getting a brush-up on our basic training or doing a lot of senseless details. Today, for instance, we dug a ditch, carried the dirt away in pails, filled the ditch with ground and planted flowers and shrubs just to keep the grass happy."*

My father did serve more toward the end of World War II and seemed to be part of the cleanup effort. We do have photos showing exploded ordnance. He did do some travelling because we have photos of his time overseas that include Guam, different living quarters and some beaches.

He left Saipan on October 16, 1946 and arrived in the United States on October 22, 1946. The war was over and he was allowed to come home. He received the World War II Victory medal and the Asiatic-Pacific campaign medal. After his discharge, he came home to Grafton and continued working at Grob until he retired in 1979. He didn't talk a lot about his war experiences, but he was active in the American Legion and the Grafton Volunteer Fire Department for many years when he returned home.



Poly's Saipan pictures, all taken in 1946.



Gene Haderer

Army Intelligence

Gene Haderer was working on his father's farm in Burlington, Ill., when he decided to enlist in the military. It was near the end of the Korean War and the 19-year-old farm boy thought it was probably a good time to, in his words, "just go in and get it over with."

I almost went in the Air Force for their cadet program, but that would have required a four-year commitment. I decided on the Army because it was two years if they chose your occupation and three years if you did. After taking all kinds of tests, I was able to choose army intelligence.



Gene spent two years in Europe and 33 straight months away from home while in the Army. area outside of our building that was just solid antennas.

Our main job was to monitor everything the Soviet Union were doing, and they were doing the same thing back to us. Back then, they didn't have many telephones, so most of their communication was by radio. In fact, they were using equipment that the United States gave them during World War II, which wasn't too terribly bright. Everything we monitored was in a code of five letters.

We worked a 6-3-6-2-6-3 shift, meaning that we'd work six days then have three days off, then work another six days and so forth. I knew when I would be working and when I'd be off far in advance, which was great because it allowed me to arrange quite a bit of travel in Europe. I visited 12 different countries while I was stationed there. I visited Alsace, which was where my family came from and where I still had very distant relatives. I remember I arrived in the town and couldn't figure out where the heck to go. All of a sudden these two older, overweight ladies started pointing and hollering and they jumped in my car. They eventually took me to another relative who spoke English and was able to translate for us. They were my relatives.

My most memorable trip, however, was the audience I had with Pope Pius XII. Whenever we would travel, we'd always look for the U.S.O. We were driving around Italy and we stopped in the U.S.O in Rome and the girl there asked if we were interested in seeing the pope. Normally, he didn't see people on Sunday but there was an American aircraft carrier coming in and he was planning on an audience with the American seamen. We were able to join them. I remember a cardinal came out and told us to yell and cheer when the pope came out, which I thought was a little strange so I didn't do it. My friend and I weaseled our way to the front of the group and were able to be right up front near Pope Pius XII. The pope gave the servicemen a medal with his picture on it which I have to this day.

I was discharged in 1957 and came home. If I had to do everything over, I think I'd do it the same way. I had a good experience in the military.

After basic training I was sent to Ft. Devens, Mass. for advanced training. We took Russian and numerous other courses for nine months. It was difficult because it was a different alphabet than what we had, but once you could read the letters, it became a little easier. For example, the Russian words for mother and father are "mama" and "papa." That's easy to read if you know the alphabet. However, the Army had us type Russian on an American typewriter so we had to use certain keys to stand in for certain letters in the Cyrillic alphabet. I guess they didn't want to spend money on Russian typewriters.

When we finished training we were given some choice as to where we could go. There were only six or eight bases around the world that had army intelligence and they only let the married guys stay in the states. I was horrified; I didn't want to go overseas. But I ended up in Germany because we had four or five bases there.

I was in what we called a "chicken outfit." Because we were intelligence, we were the ones that the enemy would make a priority to capture during war. If anything started to happen, we were to leave immediately. Thankfully, nothing ever did. We couldn't go in certain areas, such as Berlin, but that didn't bother me. I had no interest in going there anyway.

My job in Baumholder, Germany was to gather and compile strategic non-military information. We worked at the 8611 Field Station, which was this windowless building surrounded by a double barbed-wire fence. We were open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and there were guys outside who guarded the building. We had an

Mortar Man in Vietnam

After graduating from South Division High School in Milwaukee, Bruce decided he would become an engineer. He was attending Milwaukee School of Engineering and had started his second year when the draft lottery occurred. He would ultimately serve from July 1968 until February 1970.

My number in the draft lottery was 22. I thought I was pretty safe in terms of the draft until that point. I wasn't carrying a large load of classes - engineering school was difficult - so I couldn't get a deferment. However, I "volunteered" for the draft, which delayed service six months for me. You could pick the day you went in and you still only had to serve for two years.

I remember in high school they would read the names of the graduates who had died in Vietnam, so I wasn't too enthusiastic about going over there in any form. I think I could have gone into another branch of the service, but that would have required a three or four year commitment. I went into the Army on July 1, 1968, and was sent to Ft. Campbell, Ky., the same place my dad went to for basic training, and in the same barracks as my dad. Well, not the actual barracks, but the barracks we were in were from World War II.

After that most of us were sent to infantry training at Ft. Lewis, Wash. Infantry training was like basic training, but three times harder. My father told me never to volunteer for anything, but I disregarded that advice when they asked if anybody could drive a truck. I ended up getting a military driver's license, which I would be grateful for later on.

After Advanced Individual Training, they shipped 75 to 80 percent of our unit to Vietnam, but I was not one of them. I scored high enough in the physical training and aptitude tests that they wanted to send me to Non-Commissioned Officer School at Ft. Benning, Ga. This would be an additional eight weeks training, and then you would be sent to Vietnam to be in charge of an infantry platoon. I thought about it long and hard and told them that I really didn't want to participate in that. I had to go anyway. And once I arrived at the school, there were four of us who didn't want to take part in another eight weeks of training. We sat there for three weeks waiting for a new assignment because they sent our paperwork back to our last unit. They put us in a casual company, which means you do all the lousy jobs that nobody else wants to do. But luckily, I had a military license, so I drove people around to guard duty and didn't have to do the other lousy jobs.

They had three options for us: 1) We could go to Vietnam (nobody volunteered for that), 2) We could go to dog school, which meant that you trained with a dog and became a pointman in Vietnam (again, nobody volunteered for that); or 3) there was electronic sensor school. Since I had those two years at MSOE, and a background in electronics, I raised my hand and was accepted for training at the electronic sensor school in Ft. Huachuca, Ariz. My training was electronic sensor deployment, which entailed putting a variety of sensors in the field to detect troop movement. In January 1969, I was finally deployed to Vietnam.

We had sort of an unusual route to Vietnam. We went from San Francisco to Alaska - which was in the midst of a huge snowstorm. Then we flew to Hawaii where it was 80-plus degrees. We were able to get out for an hour and drink all of the free pineapple juice we wanted. The next stop, 20-plus hours later, was Vietnam. When they opened up the door the heat hit me like a blast furnace along with the overwhelming bad smell.

I became part of the 199th Infantry Brigade, 75th Ranger Division, Co. M. I thought, "Why are they assigning me here? I'm not a Ranger." A Ranger is someone that goes on long-range patrols for an extended period of time. (The 199th Brigade was specifically activated for the Vietnam War. It was deactivated in 1970.) They assigned me to this company as a replacement in the mortar platoon. They said, "See that boat out there on the river? Get your stuff and get in it." I had no idea where I was being taken. It was an airboat. The airboat pilot said, "You better keep your head down, they shoot at this boat all of the time."

The company was a long-range patrol unit with a mortar platoon. I thought, "Oh, great." I spent my first night in half of a culvert with sandbags over it. We were near a swamp and the mosquitoes were so bad that when I woke up the next morning, my face was paralyzed from all the mosquito bites. It was a big joke on the new guys. The next night they gave me mosquito netting. I was the ammo guy for the mortar platoon and had to put the correct amount of propellant on the mortar round, hand it over to the gunner, and then he fired it.

After about three weeks in the mortar unit, I received a card from the general in charge of the sensor school. There were only 20 of us in Vietnam who knew anything about sensors, and he wanted to know if I was using my sensor training. I wrote him and said I wasn't using my training. About two weeks later, the boat showed up again and they told me to get all of my stuff. I was sent back to headquarters and waited around for a few days before I got a call from a Colonel who chewed me out because I wasn't using my training. I was then assigned to BHTAC to deploy and monitor sensors by flying into numerous locations via helicopter to "plant" sensors. This lasted about six months until the sensor program was turned over to a South Vietnamese Army unit. This where I spent the remainder of my tour, plus one additional month, as a Field Advisor to the South Vietnamese Army. I was the only American with this unit.

Served in the 7th Armored Division

My grandfather, Jerry Herbst, was the seventh child in a family of 11 children: six boys and five girls. Three of the boys went in the service starting in 1941 and by that time, my grandpa was the only boy at home. He received three deferments because his father had hurt his hand and was unable to support the family.

The fourth time I went down, the deferment did not come through and I was put in the Army. I was sent to Camp Blanding in Florida, where I trained for eight months. After that we boarded the Queen Elizabeth and it took us eight days to reach Southampton, England. From there we took a small craft to Le Havre, France. Three days after that, I boarded a "40&8" boxcar, which meant that it fit either 40 men or eight horses and we went up north to Norman, Holland.

One of the fellows I was with wanted to go visit his brother on an airfield in Germany and I decided to go with him. We took a British Command car and went up on this road that was just smoking from bombs exploding. We made it up there by afternoon and stayed overnight. The next morning the P-38s and all the American planes were taken out on bombing raids.



Jerry Herbst served in the European Theatre as part of the 7th Armored Division during World War II.

We returned back to Norman, Holland just in time for the whole bunch of us to be sent to different places. I was lucky because I had my gear packed and ready because they loaded it up for me and got me on my trek. If I hadn't done that in advance, I could've been court marshalled for being absent without leave.

We were sent up into Germany into a placement center. We had to go into a small tent where there were officers and they would tell us where we were going. I ended up in the 7th Armored Division and I served in that Division until 1945. It didn't make sense because my basic training was all infantry based, and I was made a turret gunner on a half-track and a radioman. I served my time up there and then the war ended in 1945. We did some clean up work in small towns where we picked up some SS and Luftwaffe and all these guys who were hiding out.

After my time was up in Europe, I was sent back through Camp Lucky Strike in France. We then boarded a cargo ship, which took the same amount of time - eight days - as the Queen Elizabeth did to cross the ocean. We ended up in Boston for four weeks. After that, I was sent to the 44th Infantry in Camp Chaffey, Ark. and then to Camp Swift, Texas, where I became a member of the Second Infantry Division. Pretty soon after that I became a cook, and then a first cook with a T-5 rating. We were there for quite awhile, but then ended up in San Francisco in 1946 where we marched up Market Street on Army Day with full uniforms and packs. We were supposed to go to Alcatraz Island because they had a breakout, but a Marine Division came in from one of the islands so they went in instead of us.

We then went to Walla Walla, Wash., and I worked as a cook there for about eight months. Then I was given the option by my captain to become a staff sergeant in the officers' mess hall or to go home because I had enough points. I decided to go home and I was discharged at Ft. Sheridan and came home to Milwaukee.

I was a painter by trade before I was drafted and I tried to go back to painting. I got married and painting wasn't a lucrative trade because you didn't work during the winters. I went to work in factories but because I was the new guy, I was always the first one laid off. It was difficult because I was a homeowner and I had a family to support. I ended up working in maintenance in the Grafton School District for 13 years. When I retired, they counted my two years of Army time and that was 15 years and I retired permanently. I have been married to my wife Lois for 55 years and we have six children and 18 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Our family continues to grow.

My experience was minimal, not like the guys who landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day. I went through quite a bit in another world, another country. The service makes a man out of you. I was worried that I would be on the front lines and get shot, and I thank God I had the experience I did and came home safely. Being in the service and that far away from home isn't a nice experience, but you learned to deal with it and get through it. I don't know if it changed me at all; I'm still Jerry Herbst. I like to have fun with life, laugh and have people laugh with me.

Member of the Army Air Corps during World War II

Robert Hetzer was born in 1919 in New London, Wisconsin. After graduating from high school, he spent two years in a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, Camp Patterson, south of Superior. It was during the Depression and there were no jobs for young people. Robert ended up joining the Army Air Corps, and served from 1940 until 1945 and then again from 1951 until 1953.

I had just gotten out of the CCC camp that July and had worked in a couple of gas stations around town. A couple of my friends were working at the plywood factory. They weren't getting much for wages, about 45 cents an hour. Because of that we all decided that since the war was coming, we should try and enlist in something that we liked to be in instead of waiting for the draft and being put in the infantry.

We enlisted in the Army Air Corps even though they told us that it was full. Instead, they put us in a signal company that was with the Air Corps. We went to Selfridge Field in Michigan, which was a fighter station, for our basic. They tried to teach us electronics and morse code. It wasn't exactly my piece of cake. During basic, we had to climb telephone poles and stuff like that. We did codes, which was all right. I didn't care for the electronic part. And our drill sergeant was a real "hard hombre." He would look at us pretty close to see if we were clean shaven; that was one of his pet peeves.

We went on summer maneuvers in Louisiana, but we really didn't do a whole lot of anything down there. They did, however, bring us some Harley Davidson motorcycles when we were down there. They were shipped in crates. We had to uncrate them and put them together before we could learn how to ride them. We had them because we were a communication unit.

Shortly after we returned to Michigan, Pearl Harbor occurred. They came out with a letter from General Henry "Hap" Arnold at Air Force Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The letter said that they needed clerk typists and that the local commanders could not stop any applications. I applied for that and was sent to Washington in December. I was there until February and then I became part of the cadre for the Third Air Force in Tampa, Fla. and became part of a new outfit - a machine records unit. We used IBM machines to keep personnel records. We used punchcards and then the IBM machine would collate, sort and print out the cards on long sheets that were connected to each other. This allowed the general to keep track of who was stationed where.

I went down to Tampa as a private and advanced pretty fast. When I left in July 1942, I was a staff sergeant. I left Tampa for England, and my job was to help set up the Eighth Air Force. We had to avoid the U-boats, so the trip took us up to Newfoundland, Iceland and Ireland before we got to England. Those islands are really green when you see them from out in the ocean.

We didn't have much to do for awhile because we had to wait for the machines to arrive. Everything was transported by boat, but we beat the machines. We were stationed in Teddington, a suburb of London. I remember that it was hard to find places because the English had taken all the street signs down. They were afraid of a German invasion, and they thought that by taking the signs down, the Germans would have a hard time getting around.

I was stationed in England for three years. There were a lot of bombings during that time. I remember the first night we were there - we'd been there about an hour or two and were eating supper when the sirens started to go off. We didn't know what to do. The English people that were there instructed us to "Drop our meals and get in the trenches!" That's what we did, too. Or we'd end up in Air Raid shelters.

I remember the Germans would drop these small pyramid-shaped things with spikes on the Air Force bases during the bombing runs. Regardless of how they landed, there was always a spike sticking up from each corner. The idea was that when our planes would take off or land, they would puncture their tires. That didn't last too long. It was pretty sneaky, though. We most enjoyed the nice, stormy nights with a lot of lightning. When that happened, we knew that "jerry" wouldn't come over.

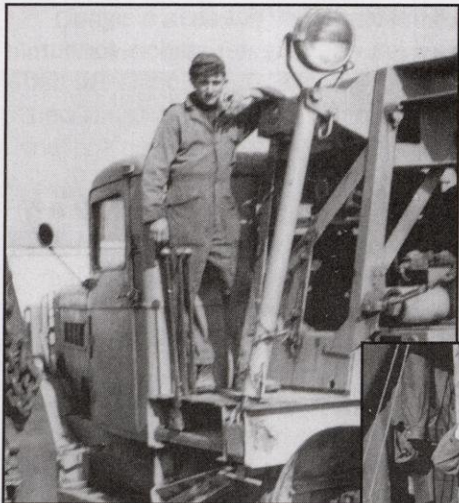
After I went to Officer Candidate School and became an officer, I had to find my own housing. Two nights after I moved from Teddington to Kingston, the Germans dropped a 2,000 pounder right in my backyard where I previously lived. It didn't go off, but the force of it coming down shook the benches loose in the air raid shelter next door. Sometimes the bombs did go off - they bombed the road we used to take to go to our pub. There was a string of 100 and 200 pounders that went off along the road where our barracks were. They didn't do too much damage, though. A stove got tipped over and some of the windows were taken out, but that was about it.

Eisenhower had an office in our headquarters building. The Germans dropped another 2,000 pounder about two blocks from the building. They ended routing the traffic around that one. About two weeks later, they diffused it. V-1 and V-2 bombs came later.

Worked in Air Force Refueling Maintenance

Grafton native Jim Hilgart served with the Air Force from February 1951 until December 1953. The Hilgarts are a local family with a long military tradition: Jim's father served in World War I, one brother and two of his sisters [Valeria, next page, and Marceline, Back from Duty:1 page 159] served in the Marine Corps and his other brother served in the Navy during World War II.

I enlisted in 1950 when the Korean War started and left in 1951. I wasn't even close to being drafted; it was just a matter of serving your country. I enlisted with two of my cousins, PeeWee Paulin (page 109) and Kenny Schanen. We enlisted in the Air Force first and then the Navy, and we were pretty sure that one of those two branches would take us. We were all called on the same day, but PeeWee forgot his birth certificate and arrived three days later.



(above) Jim on an C-2 Wrecker at the Chateauroux Air Depot in Chateauroux, France, early 1950s, (right). The French may be known by their wine, but Jim preferred to have a beer while relaxing in front of his tent in France.



We all went to Lackland AFB in San Antonio for eight weeks of training. We had an ex-Marine drill sergeant, so you can imagine what he put us through. I really didn't know what I was getting into, but after about three days, you learn. You keep your mouth shut. I did get in a little trouble with our drill instructor one day and ended up scrubbing underneath the steps with a toothbrush on both ends of the barracks.

They looked at your background a little bit, and because I was a mechanic at Riebe Garage and I had learned to fix machinery at home working for my dad's excavating business, I attended a civilian school in Chicago. The military had taken the school over, but they had civilian instructors. It was just like being in boot camp, though I learned how to gamble there. After losing my paycheck, I then learned how to hitchhike.

I ended up in Europe 18 weeks after I enlisted in the service. We went up the English Channel and it was still full of bombed out ships. There were hulls sticking up all over the place. We went to Germany where we were put on the old "40&8" cars (40 men or 8 mules) that the Germans had used. We ended up in Sontoven, Germany, which was an old Hitler Youth Camp. I was put back on another train and took it to Chateauroux,

France, which had an old French air base that had been bombed all to hell. When the Americans chased the Germans out, they bombed everything.

It was five or six years after the war had ended, but there were signs all over the place - "U.S. Go Home" and "G.I. Go Home." The French there were all communists and that was how the French appreciated what we'd done during World War II. It was always two sided: If the communists caught you downtown, they'd whip the hell out of you. There were parts of France that were non-communist and you could travel to them. I did go to Lourdes, which was nice.

When we arrived, the only Americans that were there before us were the people who would go in and set up the tent cities. And once we arrived, we were assigned to a 6-man tent, and that was where we lived for the next 14 months. We didn't have heat in the tents and the first winter I was there, it rained for 40-some days straight. It was nothing but a sea of mud. When I first got there, they'd taken an old, bombed aircraft hangar and tried to make it into a mess hall. Most of the hangars had holes in the roofs the size of cars. They patched it up, and pretty soon we had a mess hall. Chateauroux ended up becoming one of the biggest supply depots in Europe and eventually NATO took it over. I stayed there for 2 1/2 years and when I was there it was really a hell hole. I met a friend of mine who went over two years after I left and he said it was the best base in Europe. They'd fixed it up.

We'd get up at 5 a.m., go to mess and have to be on duty 10 to 12-hour shift. At first I was in aircraft reclamation and then I moved into maintenance. I did wrecker service for any trucks that had broken down, including those from the Army. Then I was assigned to a supply outfit to get into refueling maintenance. I was in charge of all of the maintenance on the aircraft tankers and other vehicles.

I went in under the World War II G.I. Bill of Rights, and because I went overseas, I had enough points to leave in about three years so I took an early out. I was glad to go home and I went home right around Christmas after being away from home for two Christmases in a row. But I wouldn't trade my Air Force experience for anything; I'm glad I did it.

Col. Valeria Hilgart, ret. As assisted by her niece, Linda Paulin Faas

Spent 33 years in the Marine Corps

My Aunt Valeria has had quite an extensive career in the Marine Corps. Val was stationed at several bases stateside, in Hawaii and Okinawa, and made many lifelong friends. When the POWs were released from Vietnam, she was in charge of Operation Homecoming, which was the return of the Marine POWs to Camp Lejeune. She was also present at the White House when President Johnson signed the bill into law that allowed women in the military to reach the rank of general. She became the first woman in the history of the Marine Corps to become the commanding officer of a military base.

I was 17 when I graduated from high school in 1941. A lot of the boys had gone into the service. I wanted to join at that time, but the school principal - John Long - talked me out of it. I came from a family of 10 and I had older siblings, including my sister, Lynn [Marceline], who was in the Marine Reserves during World War II. The principal reminded me that I was the only one at home old enough to help out. I wanted to join the WAVES because I thought that having two Marines in the family was enough.

Though I always wanted to go, I didn't until they opened up the Marine Corps to women. I found out about it by reading a county newspaper; they had an ad in there that the president had signed.

Toward the end of 1948, women were being allowed to join the Marines as regulars, not as the reserves. They opened a class in early 1949, so I went to Milwaukee, took some tests and enlisted for three years.

There were only 22 women in my recruit class and we had all kinds of attention. Because of my background - I had been working as a clerk at Grafton Foundry - I went into the O1 Field, which was Administration and I ended up having a 35-year career in the Marine Corps.

My first assignment was at the records service station at Henderson Hall at Headquarters Marine Corps. I was a typist. I stayed there until I went to Officer Candidate School in 1951 and I received my commission in 1951.

Initially women were promoted among their own group, but eventually that changed because it had to. It didn't make sense. At one time there was a cap - the Marine Corps could not be more than two percent women.

I never had a bad job in the Marine Corps. They were all good. I served in a variety of capacities, all administrative. I earned promotions and continued to move up in the ranks. When I retired in 1981, I had become the senior woman colonel in the Corps and served as Chief of Staff for the Marine Logistics Base in Albany, Ga.

You're only entitled to 30 years of commissioned service in the Marines. I actually had 32 years total - 27 months enlisted and then the rest as an officer. In 1981, I retired from the Marines, but nine months later I received a call from Headquarters asking me to come out.

My positions at Lejeune and Albany required me to negotiate labor contracts for the civilian personnel who were union members of the American Federation of Government Employees. The union had made a bid to consolidate all of the AFGE units in the Marine Corps after I retired, so that's why I was called back in 1982. When that happens, you serve at the request of the commandant. You don't get any promotions; you're just on active duty.

So I went back to Washington, D.C. in April 1982. I set up an office and hired people and put a contract together. We had civilians and military personnel and we negotiated a contract for the 22 Marine bases that employed civilian contractors. We successfully negotiated the contract without a fight with the union.

I only intended to stay in the Marine Corps for three years. I didn't think about making a career out of it until I was in the officer ranks and I don't remember any specific day when I made the decision. I just kept on going. As long as you like it, why change?

After her retirement, Aunt Valeria moved to North Carolina and built a home, where she lived for many years. She has since returned home to the Grafton area and remains a proud Marine.



Colonel Valeria Hilgart celebrating her retirement from the Marine Corps in 1981.

Staff Sgt. James Hintz As told to Vicki Schanen

Jet Engine Mechanic in the Air Force

Jobs were hard to find when Jim graduated from Lutheran High School in Milwaukee. He worked as a trucker at Seaman Body before enlisting in the Air Force. Since the Korean War was going on, Jim knew he would be drafted and decided he wanted to make the choice of how he would serve.

My older brother served in the Army and guarded Japanese prisoners in New Caledonia. My one brother-in-law was a career Navy man and my other brother-in-law was 4-F. I thought about the Air Force because it gave you a place to sleep every night and a hot meal. After testing, they told me I was good with my hands but also had the ability to solve things. I ended volunteering to be a jet engine mechanic.



(above) Jim served in the Air Force from October 1951 until November 1955. (left) The 6th Field Maintenance Squadron team at Walker Air Force Base, Roswell, New Mexico. Jim is second from the right, back row.



They taught us everything about jet propulsion. We were trained for F-80s and F-84s, and we learned every instrument on the panel. They also taught us about the parts of the jet engines and the planes. A lot of my friends went to bases and later became jet crew chiefs.

After we finished training, they asked if we wanted to go to Europe or specialize in jet engines. I specialized and was sent to Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois for additional training. It was only 90 miles from Milwaukee and I would hitchhike to-and-from Milwaukee. Coming home was pretty important - I had been going with my now-wife for two years by that point. We wrote to each other and we decided to get engaged. I bought her a ring at the PX.

We were given a choice again as to where we wanted to go: Texas,

New Mexico and Europe. I took New Mexico because I'd made the commitment to my girlfriend. They had B-36s there, which was the biggest bomber the Air Force had with four jet engines and six reciprocating engines.

Our job was to change out the engines. We'd take them off, overhaul them in our maintenance department, put them on a test stand to see if everything worked well and then we'd put it on another plane. Jet

engines were the easiest mechanical work I did. Some of my friends worked on the reciprocating engines, which wasn't a very pleasant job because it was full of grease and oil.

I stayed in New Mexico the entire time. While we were there, I played fastpitch softball on a base team. In fact, the week before I was going home for our wedding, I got hit by a softball right between my eyes. I had two black eyes! They kind of fixed it up in the wedding pictures.

We would go on secret missions to Thule, Greenland. They said not to tell our wives or families where we were going, but just to tell them that we'd be gone. They'd send us ahead in a 135; they had the nose of the plane which opened up and put in a jet engine and reciprocating engines. At Thule, you could tell who had been stationed there the longest because they would turn really white. They'd lose their color due to the lack of sunshine.

Once when we were there, there was nothing wrong with the jet engines on the planes that were coming in, so they put me on guard duty. I ate lunch around noon and went back to the barracks to take a nap. I woke up and it was pitch black outside. I thought, "Oh, no! I'm in trouble." But I looked at my watch and it was only 3 p.m. in the afternoon. I also remember that the base crew that unloaded us asked if we were from the 6th Bomb Wing, which we were. Moscow Molly had informed them that we would be coming. She'd also tell them things like, "Hey, you guys at Thule - on your No. 3 runway, the 15th light is burned out." She knew we were coming, but we hadn't been allowed to tell our wives and families. It was kind of scary. How she knew, I don't know.

Our "secret missions" were to get the planes off the ground as fast as we could. From there, they flew to the Russian Zone, came back and circled the base and then they headed back to Roswell. The first time we went on the 10 planes, only one made it back. The rest were scattered around Labrador, Canada and the United States with problems, things like the props swelling up with moisture. We went up three times and the third time they all came back. And Moscow Molly always knew we were coming.

Marvin Hoffmann

Member of an Anti-Aircraft Unit

In 1953, Marvin Hoffmann was working at the West Bend Co. when he was drafted. He had received at least one six-month deferment because of the work on his family's farm, but he reported for duty on Jan. 12, 1954.

I think that when you're drafted, you tend to expect the worst. Overall, I think I was lucky. I remember a group of us left Port Washington and spent the first day at the Induction Center. We all had to take the oath of induction and they said, "If you agree with this, you must take one step forward." We took a bus from Milwaukee to Ft. Leonardwood, and we arrived in the middle of the night. I remember they fed us coffee with saltpeter - it was bitter as all heck. They said the saltpeter would "help us sleep better." I'm not so sure, but I think they fed it to us the entire time we were in basic training. Three of us from the area - John Jentges from Belgium, Jules Clausing from Cedarburg and Glenn Hayes from Port Washington all ended up going through basic training together.

My advanced training was in anti-aircraft at Ft. Bliss, Texas. I didn't have any input into what I was trained in, though they did interview us. The thing that I most remember about Texas was that we were in five-man huts, and they had quarter-inch cracks in the walls. If there was any wind at night, we'd wake up with sand in our teeth.

After a week or two at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, a staging area, we boarded our ship, sailed past the Statue of Liberty and headed for Europe. It was almost like a cruise. We landed in Bremerhaven, Germany, which was better than going to Korea. I ended up being assigned to the 40th AAA Unit out of Rhine Kasern, Germany, which were former WWII German officer billets. After six months, we moved to Kleber Kasern, Kaiserslautern. My MOS was 1602, and I was assigned to automatic weapons. There were five men to a squad, and I was initially a gunner. It was the worst position - it was so loud, and then we had the steel pots on our head, so when the guns would fire, it would echo. Later, I became a squad leader (and then a section leader), which was really a sergeant's job even though I was a corporal. I remember we had these little patches that we wore to signify leadership because they had froze rank. I had a corporal reporting to me, and I can tell you those little patches didn't make that much difference. We were stationed in Europe in case the Russians decided to make a move, but we were far enough behind the lines so we didn't get involved in any standoffs. Our role was to protect the airspace around Frankfurt.

Every six months our unit had to qualify on the firing range on the Baltic Sea. On one occasion, "C" Battery was firing when the target cable was cut by a 90 mm projectile half way to the B-26 which was towing the target, a "goof up" in the radar section.

I did have some time to travel and I knew my mother had a cousin in Germany and she was originally from Bavaria. I did go visit him - he was my second cousin - and I remember he wasn't really that happy to see me. I went to church with him and he made a point of not walking out with me. I think I actually knew more German before I went over there - one time I ran into some schoolkids who came over and inspected us. They saw my name - Hoffmann - and started talking to me in German. I asked them if they knew "Old German," which is what my family spoke back in America. They ran off to ask someone, probably their grandparents, what I meant, and came back. I could understand them a lot better after they came back.

When my time was up, I came home. If I had stayed in, I could've gotten promoted. The ride home was terrible on a troop transport with 2,000 enlisted men, officers and crew and we slept seven high. Because it was so rough, we all had to stay below deck. They would come through and make sure that one guy would have his head this way and his feet that way, and then alternate all seven guys. Still, it was cramped and I remember once a guy above me threw up and hit me in the arm. But never mind, we were on our way home!

The worst injustice was when we got back to Ft. Sheridan. It was right before Christmas and all of us returning guys had to pull duty so the permanent guys could go home for a few days' leave. I had already lined up a ride home - Eileen and her brother were coming to get me. According to the duty roster, I was assigned KP, which I hadn't done since basic training. I went to my commanding officer and said, "I only live 100 miles away and I have a ride coming..." He told me to sign out and I did. When I came back, nobody ever noticed that I was gone.



Marvin Hoffmann returned home to marry his fiancée, Eileen, and take over his father's farm in the Town of Saukville.

Wayne G. Horman

As told to Vicki Schanen

Truck driver during World War II

Wayne Horman was born in LaCrescent, Minn. in 1924 to Calverna and George W. Horman. The Hormans had 10 boys and three girls and all 10 Horman boys would serve in the military. His father had been called to service in 1918, but on the day he appeared for conscription at the draft board, World War I was declared over. His two oldest sons, Wayne and Ken, would both go to the enlistment station together for the next World War. Wayne's younger brother, Robert, enlisted in the U.S. Navy in April 1944 and served on USS North Carolina. His younger brother, Douglas, enlisted in the U.S. Army on October 2, 1946 and served in Alaska.

I didn't have basic training first. From Ft. Sheridan, I went through five more military installations around the country - doing mostly KP - until I ended up at Ft. George Wright, Wash. I was assigned to part of the 863rd Aviation Engineers Battalion and headed for Australia.

We still hadn't had any real training; all we had really was the KP and some guard duty. When we arrived in Sydney, we were sent out to the race track where we had an encampment. We practiced road building because we were going to New Guinea, and our job would be to build air strips. I think that, during the couple months we were in Australia, we got firing practice once.



We were then transferred to other racetracks in Brisbane and Townsville, where we also set up encampments. We didn't know we were going to New Guinea until we got there. When arrived in New Guinea we had to set up our own camp like in Australia, but we did everything six feet off the ground due to the alligators and snakes. Our captain and our clerk had an encounter with a 16 1/2-foot python. A short time later a crocodile came ashore. We saw him along side the road and he started coming toward us. The driver sped up and the crocodile sped up too - he was going about 30 mph. A couple of guys were bold enough to bind him up and took him back to camp. There was a Swede in camp who boiled up the tail - but not long enough - and he got "stomach syphilis."

We'd look for good, solid ground to build an airstrip. We'd have to move all the trees and make a foundation for the strip. We'd look for concrete or rock first and set that down in the mud. On top of that, we'd put sand and pierce planking and roll over it with the heavy roller. It would take us five or six months to get a working airstrip.

Wayne started his military career as a dump truck driver, but later went on to be a fire chief and a recruiter before retiring from the military.

I was transferred in January 1944 to the 1384th Engineer Petroleum Distribution Co. The idea was that we would build 50,000-gallon tanks at dock sites and run pipeline to the airstrips. We went to Wewak and then on to Morati, Netherlands East Indies. We had a bomb raid while we were in Morati. We moved to the Philippines, which were under fire at that time. We stayed there until right after the A-bomb dropped.

MacArthur came ashore two weeks after we did. He had three companies of Marines helping him ashore and they had photographers on the beach. We stood back from the beach a little bit and waved at them. Here comes MacArthur wading through the water! We had a good laugh - we were there before he was.

One time from Tarlac we had to go down to Bataan for something. There were trees hanging over the road, so we usually had a passenger with a rifle. There were two of our trucks going down the road. A Japanese fell out of one of the trees onto the bed of my truck and slashed at me. While he was doing that, my passenger shot him. I still have a scar on the back of my shoulder from that. They trimmed back those trees the next day. But the war was coming down to the end, though a lot of those Japanese went into caves and didn't know the war was over.

We then went to Hok-Kai-Do, Japan, which was where they had their "tank farms." We took the one over in Hokodate. Just about that time, though, my number came up and I got to come home. I had 76 points.

Though I did come home, I re-enlisted in the Army Air Corps in August 1946 for three years. They sent me to fire-fighting school in Panama. They thought that, since I had been a truck driver, I'd be good at driving fire trucks. I was part of a crash crew. I became a recruiter in 1951, shortly after I got married. I even had an office in Times Square for five years. I spent nine years as a recruiter in New York City before they decided I should go to Alaska and be a fire inspector. My final job was a return to recruiting, and I became one in Milwaukee.

I retired after spending 21 1/2 years in the service. It was 1964, and they were getting ready to ship me to Vietnam. I was supposed to have my retirement ceremony at Truax Field, but the weather got in the way and the base commander that was supposed to do the ceremony had retired a week earlier. All they did was give us our retirement papers and said we did a good job.

Ralph Houseman

Served in the Navy during World War II and the Korean War

Before enlisting in the Navy in World War II, I practiced several years as a lawyer in Grafton with Attorney Richard C. Bonner. At that time, Ozaukee County was much smaller and there were just 15 lawyers practicing in the county. Eight of them served in the Armed Forces in World War II, and one of them, Robert Schanen, gave his life for his country as a navigator of a bomber that crashed after a raid on Germany.

I started my naval career at the United States Naval Reserve Midshipmen's School at Columbia University. This was a very large training center and you started as an apprentice seaman, advanced to a midshipmen, and then if you were not bilged out for some reason, you were commissioned as an ensign in the Naval Reserve. Graduates of this program were referred to as "90-day wonders" for the reason that they were commissioned at the end of 90 days training, whereas graduates of the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis went four years before they were commissioned. In turn, we referred to the Annapolis graduates as "trade school boys." Several months into the training program I was transferred to the graduate school of business administration of Harvard University for further duty under instruction. We spent one year at the business school and this was a great year to be on the banks of the Charles River in Boston.

After some further training, I was assigned to a small aircraft carrier, the USS Bogue CVE-9, which was part of a hunter-killer group operating in the North Atlantic against the German submarines. We also did convoy duty to England.

Such a hunter-killer group consisted of an aircraft carrier, four destroyer escorts, and operated with a complement of 21 fighter and dive bombers. The Bogue and her escorts were responsible for sending 11 German and two Japanese submarines to a watery bottom in the North Atlantic - the most of any American group operating in the Atlantic. For this, the ship was awarded the Presidential Unit citation.

In one of the last anti-submarine engagements in the Battle of the Atlantic in 1945, the Bogue and its aircraft and escorts were successful in sinking one of the last German submarines and the last of 13 for which the Bogue received credit. A barrier force had been created in the North Atlantic seeking to intercept a group of German submarines which were believed to be heading toward the United States. In this engagement, the USS Frederick S. Davis was sent to the bottom with the loss of most of her crew and shortly thereafter, the same German submarine was also sent to the bottom. Survivors of both the German submarine and the Frederick Davis were picked up from the North Atlantic and transferred to the Bogue.

I shall always remember the violent weather in the North Atlantic and many times it was necessary to lash yourself down to the bunk in order to attempt to get any sleep.

When the German war ended we went through the Panama Canal and operated in the South Pacific as part of the so-called Magic Carpet fleet. We also served for a time as part of the naval occupation of Japan.

I especially remember Christmas Day 1945. I and a number of other sailors from the ship had taken a motor whale boat to the Port of Yokusaka and then the train into Tokyo for some shopping and sightseeing. Upon our return to the carrier, the motor whale boat was overloaded and as we were heading toward the ship, a destroyer came by and its wake capsized our motor whale boat. After some anxious moments, we were finally rescued in Tokyo Bay and taken back to our carrier. The carrier never seemed more like home than it did on that day of Christmas 1945.

I was released to inactive duty in July 1946, when I resumed the practice of law in Grafton. Shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, I was recalled to active duty where I served as trial counsel and defense counsel in many court-martial cases at the Naval Air Technical Training Center in Norman, Okla. I was returned to inactive duty and I still retain my commission as a retired officer in the Naval Reserve, although I have continued to practice law in Grafton ever since my release from active duty.



Lt (JG) Ralph E. Houseman served on the USS Bogue CVE-9 during World War II. During the Korean War, he served as legal counsel in the Navy.

Chief Petty Officer in the Naval Reserves

Tom Ingram served with the Navy from October 1957 until July 1968 and served with the Naval Reserves from August 1968 until January 1989, when he retired from the service.

I grew up in Birmingham, Ala., and left there when I joined the Navy at almost 19. I had left school in the 10th grade. I bummed around and odd-jobbed to make pocket change until I finally decided it was time to do something. My buddy and I decided to go in the service. We had tried to join the Air National Guard and they rejected me. My buddy said that if I didn't get in, he wasn't going to join, so we started trying the other branches and the Navy took us. I signed up for four years, which was the minimum contract.

You know how at home you have floors and walls? In the Navy, you learn a new language. The floor is a deck; the walls are bulkheads and the ceiling is overhead. You had to learn all that, plus port and starboard. Your GQ (general quarters) is the station where you needed to go when your ship was under imminent attack. They had a ship at San Diego called the USS Never Sail and we learned a lot of the lingo on there.

When I went in the Navy I wanted to be trained as an electrician. But when I got out of boot camp, I was a seaman apprentice.

I went aboard my first ship, the aircraft carrier USS Philippine Sea. They assigned me the First Division, which was Deckforce (the deck apes). That Division was primarily in charge of the forward part of the carrier and the cleaning of the outer surfaces of the ship. We swabbed the decks and did things like tying up and releasing the ship.

But first, the day after we got going, I went to mess cooking for three months. Every division onboard ship had to send someone to the mess decks to work in the sculleries - the pots and pans, the garbage locker and so forth. After that I had head cleaning for three months in officer country, so it had to be "spic and span."

Our job, as a ship, was to just cruise the seas. We were the world's protector. We were able to



(above) Tom aboard the USS Princeton, between 1960 and 1962. (left) Chief Petty Officer Ingram in 1987.



leave the ship when we didn't have a duty day, so we could visit all these ports. Sometimes, we were also able to leave after our duty day was complete. I have some memorable experiences, but I don't know if I really want to tell them. [Tom laughs] Being a single man and the first time away from home, there were lots of things to see and do.

Between my first and second ships, I had some shore duty at the San Francisco Naval Shipyard. I stayed there about a month. I still had the deck rating and hadn't gone to school yet. I worked on the Mothball Fleet - the ships that had been decommissioned and reserved for use at a later date, if needed. I then was reassigned to Vallejo to work on another Mothball Fleet. The personnel officer up there, for some odd reason, interviewed every new person that came on board. He asked me if I was happy. I told him I wanted to be more than a swab jockey. He put me down with the Electrical Group and a First Class Electrician took me under his wing and taught me a lot of things - he held night tutoring for me. Finally, there was an opportunity for me to go to Electricians A School, but I had to extend my enlistment another year. I had a hard time, but I did it.

In 1961, I became an electrician - an E3 Striker - and was assigned to the USS Princeton. They put me down in Distribution Systems, which was where the generators were. I learned a lot and made Third Class Electrician. I wanted to go for Second Class, but as a test I had to draw a circuit of the mimic board between the generators. I looked and studied and got the textbooks out. I did receive that recommendation and got my rank, but it was getting time to get out. Finally, I got to thinking about it. I was a single man, had nothing to go home for and I decided to stay in the Navy. They wanted another six years. I decided to re-enlist and went for further schooling.

When we were at Great Lakes, a buddy of mine asked me if I wanted to go to Milwaukee to meet some girls. We took the train up and we went to the Eagles Club, and he just happened to run into a girl that he knew. She had some friends with her and one of them happened to be the girl I married in July 1963. Sandy and I have now been married 41 years. I also stayed with the Navy until 1968 and then joined the Naval Reserves, where I served until 1989.

Harold Johnson

Member of the Army Air Corps Enlisted Reserve

Could there be anyone more gung-ho than a bunch of high school boys wanting to serve during World War II? Port Washington's Harold Johnson knows the answer.

I enlisted at 17, on February 12, 1944, but I couldn't leave. I had to finish high school. I graduated in June but didn't go to the ceremony. In fact, we shipped out graduation night. There were four of us that went at roughly the same time: Ray Sauer, John Mead, Marvin Hetzel and myself. We were all air cadets and we expected to go on for air training. We didn't know how long we'd be in, but our commitment was for the duration of the war plus six months.

I remember that I picked the Army Air Corps because I thought that if I had to kill someone, it would be in an impersonal manner, not on a one-to-one basis. I had the feeling that I'd be shooting down machinery, which would give the crew a chance to get out.

We were sent to the Michigan College of Mining and Technology, which is now MIT, in Houghton, Mich. Once there, we were to receive our military training and complete regular college work in pre-engineering. We had regular civilian instructors for the classroom work and then the Army took over our physical training. We spent nine months there, so we did get to experience their winter. The snow would come up to your chest and the people didn't even bother to shovel their sidewalks. They all just walked in the streets.

I do remember that we were able to come home on the train. We had a transfer point somewhere in the middle of nowhere, and we'd always hope that the train was actually running that day or that we didn't just miss it. We'd always get off in Fredonia, but every time the conductor would warn us that we couldn't get on there, we'd have to go to Milwaukee.

Once we finished our classroom work, we were split up. Two of the guys had left earlier and went to Biloxi, Miss., which was then closed due to smallpox.

I was sent to Shepherd Field in Texas for flight training, but when we got there, we had to go through a second basic training, which was quite a joke. I was in charge of keeping the machine gun clean. All I had to do was run a rifle patch down the barrel because it shot blanks.

The Air Corps had us studying every known hand weapon except the tommy gun. We had to be able to do the .45 blindfolded. I really think they had us go through the training to keep us busy more than anything else. I wasn't particularly fond of Texas. It would go from 30 degrees in the morning to 110 in the shade, but there wasn't any shade. The water was always warm and if there was one thing I missed, it was cold water.

When we arrived for flight training in Denver, Col., they called us all in and said that we'd washed out. How could we wash out if we hadn't even washed in yet? I was reassigned to air crew training and became a remote control turret mechanic/gunner on a B-29 crew.

I remember we woke up one morning and it was very quiet on the field. Normally there were touch-and-go landings all day. Our B-29 had been called to Tinian to back up the Enola Gay. We were told to pack up our bags; our crew was going to the Pacific. We took our bags to the railroad station and waited.

By then we'd gotten news of the atomic bomb and the Enola Gay's successful run. So, they sent us back down to the railroad depot and told us to get our bags. We weren't going anywhere. There was the huge mountain of duffel bags - all alike - and we had to find ours!

Within a week or so, I was sent to Truax Field in Madison and discharged. It was Armistice Day 1945 and I was 19 years old. I'd already spent a year and a half in the military.

However, Senator Johnson from Colorado got behind all of us cadets and pointed out that the military put us in this program to teach us how to fly. We were then given two choices: Either we could get a discharge after four years in the reserve or we could re-enlist and go to flight school. I took the reserve option and ended up going into a group stationed in Michigan. I never heard anything from them, though I did expect to get a call when the Korean War started. But then again, the plane I was trained on was the B-29, which wasn't used in Korea.

I later went on to school to study engineering. I think my military training did help me in life. It sobered me down quite a bit in those 1 1/2 years.



Three young fellows from Ozaukee County training in Michigan, 1944: (l-r) Ray Sauer, Harold Johnson and Marvin Hetzel.

T/Sgt. Wilson "Doc" Jones

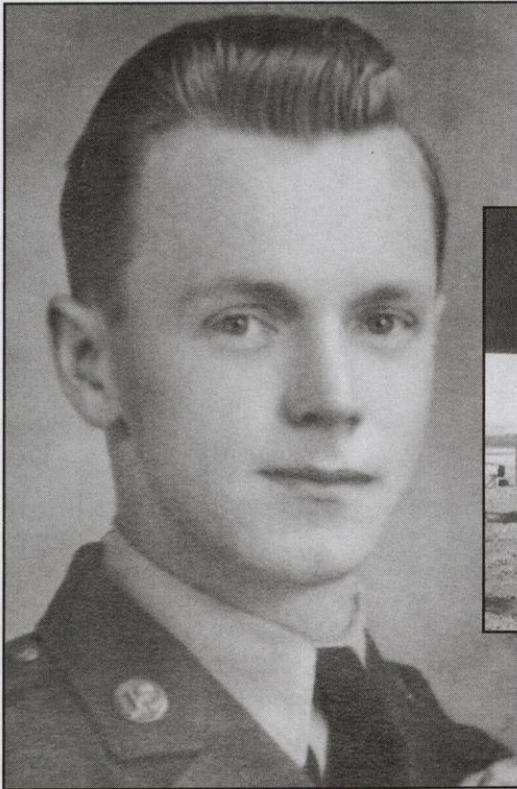
As remembered by his wife,
Marcella Roden Jones

Ammunition Section Chief during World War II

My husband joined the Army Air Force in 1941. Initially he was sent to Aberdeen, Maryland for three months of ammunition training before heading off to Air Force bases in Spokane, Wash. and Colorado Springs, Colorado. He completed his stateside training in Great Falls, Montana in January 1943. Doc's training was in keeping with the preparations the group was making before going overseas to fight in World War II. There were four squadrons in the Second Bombardment Group, some of which dated back to World War I.

The Second Bombardment Group was organized in September 1918 at Moulon, France. Its original members flew French Breguet day bombers, which was quite a change from the B-17 Flying Fortresses that Doc would be on in World War II. The first B-17 was produced in 1935, but the U.S. military would quickly go on to use it in every World War II combat zone.

The squadrons were all training at satellite bases in Montana during November 1942 and they completed their training in January 1943. The Second Bomb Group's squadrons then moved on to



(above) Doc worked as an Ammunition Section Chief for the B-17 Flying Fortress. (right) Doc and a fellow crew member from New Jersey at an air base in North Africa, 1943.



Camp Kilmer, New Jersey in March 1943 and prepared to head overseas. Doc left with the squadrons and arrived in Africa that year.

The 15th Air Force's Second Bomb Group was stationed in North Africa. The squadrons participated in the Tunisian Campaign,

knocked out Pantelleria and helped soften targets in Sicily, Sardinia and Italy. The 15th Air Group also participated in the air battles over Regensburg and Stair and helped support the Army's ground troops at Cassino, Anzio and Southern France. Another major target was the German aircraft industrial areas and the Ploesti oil field, which was where Lt. Roy Harms of Grafton - one of the namesakes of Grafton's Rose-Harms Legion Post and Grafton's first World War II casualty - was shot down.

We still have a copy of an article that ran in the newspaper when Doc and his crew had flown their 300th mission, which occurred on the 15th Air Force's anniversary. Doc's crew attacked targets in Vienna, Austria on that mission.

When this article ran, the Second Bomb Group had flown more than 18 months of combat missions in the Mediterranean. They'd dumped 18,568 tons of bombs on axis targets, completed more than 7,574 sorties and shot 496 enemy planes out of the sky.

When Doc was stationed in Africa, he had the opportunity so see many U.S.O shows. He saw Bob Hope and singer Frances Langford. Frances was there when it was very cold and one of Doc's friends loaned her a pair of his G.I. pants so she could keep warm. She returned them when she was finished and he saved them and wouldn't even wash them! Doc also ran into a friend from Grafton when he was stationed in North Africa: Chester Gramoll. They were stationed near each other and had the opportunity to spend some time together.

Doc spent more than two years in Africa and Italy and was discharged in June 1945. He returned to Grafton and worked at Tecumseh for many years.

Thank you from your wife, Marcella, and your children Kurtis, Keith, Kim, Kaye and Kevin.

Mike Karrels

Army Mechanic

Fresh out of high school, Fredonia native Mike Karrels happened to talk to a neighbor who had recently returned home from serving in the Army. Heeding his words of wisdom, Mike decided it was a good place to be at that time in his life and he enlisted for three years.

I don't remember why I enlisted in the Army except for the conversations I had with my neighbor. I liked to fool around with tractors and I had a good recruiter who said I could probably go into mechanics. I scored well in the aptitude tests, and I knew I would be trained in mechanics. I left home in September 1960 and reported to the reception center at Ft. Leonardwood, Mo.

Normally when you get processed out it takes about three days. Just as we arrived at the reception center, a group of National Guardsmen (the "No Goods") came through and were given priority, which delayed our processing. It took us 14 days to get our 150-200 guys through processing, and it was pretty boring. It was really hot and the only excitement we had was a Coke machine.

I do remember that someone tried to commit suicide under the barracks. The strange thing about this is that I happened to mention it a few years ago in Grafton, and one of my fellow Legionnaires, Tom Ulezelski, remembered it too! He was there at the same time I was, but we didn't know each other back then.

When training ended, we were sent to Ft. Riley, Kansas for a month, but then our company was moved to Ft. Sheridan for about a month and a half. We then moved again on a TDY [temporary duty] to Camp McCoy in Wisconsin, where we supported the National Guard. In my opinion, Camp McCoy was as close to heaven as you could get. It was my kind of place. When you woke up in the morning, you could smell the spruce trees.

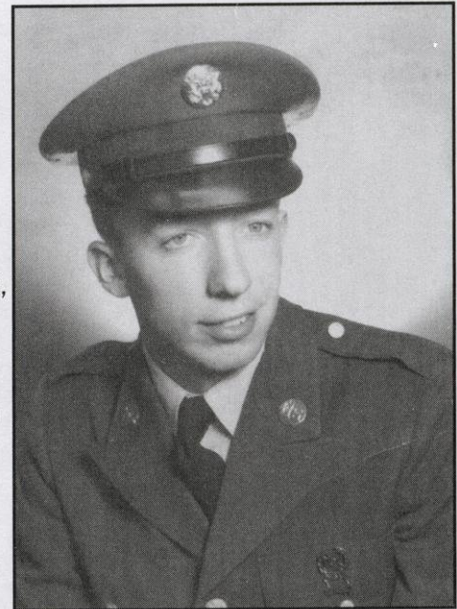
Three months later, we moved back to Ft. Sheridan and I became the driver for our commanding officer, Major Adrian, who was a decent guy and also from Wisconsin. I drove him around in either a jeep or a 1957 olive-green Chevy. Once a week, I would take him to the Nike Missile site in South Chicago; I would also do things like pick up his laundry. He was a backseat driver and didn't like the way I drove. I told him that I was taught to stay one car length away for every 10 mph and he told me, "We'll never get anywhere that way." At one point, somebody cut me off and I drove over the curb. All I remember was seeing his feet go flying up all over. After he recomposed himself, he said, "Now you're learning!"

I was also at Ft. Sheridan during the Cuban Missile Crisis. It was more of an inconvenience for us than a reason to be scared because we were confined to our barracks. We were part of a STRAC (Still Tough Ready Around the Clock) unit and supported the vehicles for the 84th Division. We had to sit in the barracks the whole weekend - they wouldn't even let us go to the PX - and on Monday morning they called the alert off.

During the Berlin Crisis, we had to pack up everything - from our dinnerware to our weapons - in a big Conex container, and our vehicles and supplies were shipped by boat. We traveled by train to New York City and then on the USS Patches to Germany for another TDY assignment. It was a horrible trip with horrible food. We had powdered milk and eggs. I remember we had peaches for a meal and I was so excited because I really liked peaches. During chow, the ship was swaying something fierce and all of a sudden the guy next to me went "y-e-e-a-a-a-h" and vomited all over his mess tray. I got up, whirled around and hit my head on a beam. I ended up going to the infirmary for stitches and I never did eat my peaches.

Right after we returned to Ft. Sheridan, I received orders to return to Germany because they needed a 634.1, which was my MOS. I didn't want to go back because I'd had such a rough trip on the Patches. My mother ended up getting me some Dramamine and I slept most of the way to Europe. I actually liked it there. At one point a buddy and I took a month off and toured the countries in his '58 Opal.

I remember that my old neighbor gave me a bit of advice before I went in. He said that, in the military, "you get out what you put in." That was sure true. I knew very early into my experience that I probably wouldn't make a career of it because I missed home and civilian life ... but my three years in the Army were some of the best years of my life. I'm glad I did it. Our sons, Marty and Andy, both went into the service as well. Marty served in the Army from 1985-1989 and was later in the Reserves. Andy went in the Air Force in 1989 and still serves as a member of the 440th Airlift Wing in Milwaukee.



Mike still remembers his MOS: 634.1 Fuel and Electric Repair. Though he was mechanically inclined from the start, his training included activities such as a three-hour lecture on spark plugs.

Robert J. Kather

As told to Vicki Schanen

Machine Gunner in the Marines

Robert Kather wanted to go in the Marine Corps since he was a little boy growing up in Sheboygan. He doesn't know what prompted his interest, just that he thought it would take him out to the West Coast where it was warmer than in Wisconsin, which turned out to be where he was stationed during his entire stint in the Marine Corps.

I joined the Marines right away out of high school and I had to give them two years. They said, "If you like it after two years, you can reenlist for two more. They were trying a shorter commitment, which I liked. My basic



Robert served with the U.S. Marine Corps from August 1956 until August 1958.

training was at Camp Pendleton, so I was able to get out to the West Coast right away. I wasn't married at the time, but my future wife and I wrote letters after I left for California.

I went in with four other guys from the area. Two were from Random Lake and two were from Sheboygan. Three of us stayed together the entire time.

During basic training, I remember seeing planes being built and those same planes took us out to Chanel Lake, California. After basic, we did advanced training - which was combat training - in the area. As part of my combat training, we'd swim in the ocean and there were sharks in there. We'd dive off a landing barge four miles out and have to swim to shore in our dungarees. They did give us

life jackets, though. One time, we even took a 100-mile hike after our training, complete with packs and machine guns.

When I finished my training, I was permanently assigned to Camp Pendleton as a machine gunner. We still attended a lot of classes, but life was more normal. They rotated us through other jobs - I remember making eggs and I did do guard duty.

We'd get up at 5:30 a.m. The food was okay. I ate a lot of chicken which I didn't even like before I went in the Marines.

Unfortunately, some times the chicken wasn't



well cooked and it was bloody. We were in California, but we didn't get much seafood.

During the time that I was in the Marines they were still doing different atomic tests, and we could watch them from observation points and we were participants in the tests. Participation was not optional. They did the testing at Dulles Air Force Base in Nevada, and we drove past it when we left California and went home.

I participated in a test shortly before I got out. I was pretty close to Ground Zero. They had us in the trenches - when the blast went off, we were told to put our arms over our heads and we could see the bones in our bodies. We asked our instructor, "Did we actually see that?!" and he told us we did indeed.

After the explosion, we walked right through the detonation point. The helicopters had to take us out of there; they had to land first because there was so much dust in the air. They were bad tests. They made us want to never go through something like that again. We saw what the effects were of those bombs.

At one point, they were looking for volunteers to go to Iran for the occupation. Any volunteer would get 30 extra days of pay. I didn't do it. I didn't want to make the commitment because I could have been there for the entire duration. I knew my time to get out was coming.

We had free time when we were stationed out there. We went to Tijuana quite a bit, but we also visited Long Beach. I did go to a Rose Bowl game. I enjoyed my time on the West Coast. We lived in Sheboygan for quite awhile, then we moved back out to Nevada for a long time. We moved back to Wisconsin four years ago to be near our kids.

When we got out, three of the guys I went in with hitchhiked home. Another guy was actually in prison - he had taken liquor onto the base. I took the train home and I was able to leave a few weeks early. Had I wanted to re-enlist - which I didn't - I would have been required to make a four-year commitment. I went back to my part-time job, which became a full-time job. I was a ice-cream maker for Verifine Dairy for 17 years. I also got married the October after I returned home.

John E. Katzka

Air Force Intelligence and Cartographer

The year 1961 was a tough year for a young man without a degree or a career. I had recently dropped out of college (UWM) because of financial difficulties and had been let go from Patrick Cudahy where I learned enough about meat packing and butchering to know that I didn't want to do any of the many jobs I had there over two years. The economy was in the doldrums and the draft was in the wings. So I joined the Air Force.

Lackland Air Force Base is reality for all new recruits though certainly not as psychologically and physically demanding as basic training for the Army or the Marines. After the usual confrontations (a skin-head haircut, forced marches in tropically-August Texas and mindless standing around in formation) all meant to make us aware that we were not civilians anymore and a round of standardized tests, I was selected for Morse code intercept training in Mississippi. Counting dits and dahs and learning to type wasn't much fun and my experience off base suggested that the good people of the gulf area would have preferred that we send our checks, but not offend their sensitivities with our presence.

Air Force intelligence, thought by some to be an oxymoron, can be interesting. At the collection level, it is work done by Airmen, supervised by NCOs with officers largely along for the ride. The Island of Crete offered an experience both foreign and challenging. We wrestled with Cold War realities while living on a lovely though rather desolate island. Sports were the ticket to get off the "rock" as we called it and I traveled through the Mediterranean and Europe, playing basketball and volleyball.

The most memorable moment came after a nasty motorcycle accident in which I broke a collarbone. Unfortunately my friend and I were hours from the base and neither of us spoke Greek. A farmer loaded me in the back of his pickup truck and drove us over the mountainous trails while I sank into a surreal agony dealing with the bouncing and shaking.

We worked shift work; 3 days during the day, 3-mids and 3-nights, followed by 3 days off. Entertainment, when not dealing with broken collarbones, was 45-minutes away in Iraklion, the island's capital. The real adventure was the taxi rides with Greek drivers who thought that next month they would be on the Formula One circuit. Often we began our three-day break on the patio of the Hotel Knossos, sipping Ouzo and looking out on the wharf still scarred by the fierce fighting in WW II.

There were a couple of high points outside of sports. For one, I was selected "Airman of the Quarter" and for my prize I was a guest on the set of "The Moon Spinners" on Crete and met John and Hailey Mills and Eli Wallach. The other experience evolved around my commander's efforts to get me into an officer-commissioning program. I had been accepted, but a personnel officer mistakenly reassigned me back to the U.S. and for reasons that would make no sense to anyone outside of the military, I was declared ineligible for the program. This snafu ended any interest I might have had in a career in the military.

With the usual brilliance of military logistics, I was sent back to the U.S. to become a cartographer. Western Massachusetts was home for my last two years of my service time. Again sports provided travel. There was something anticlimactic about this assignment. I enjoyed the work, making maps for Strategic Air Force pilots, but I was ready to return to civilian life. Our relationship to the base was informal and I was not subjected to the spit and polish of a normal unit.

Four years after leaving, I returned to UWM to finish up that degree program. I left the service as a sergeant wiser though not any richer. I had performed my duty because it was the right thing to do.



John enlisted in the Air Force in 1961.

Charles "Chuck" Kirst

As remembered by his wife, Sally Kirst and his daughter, Charlene Kirst Karrels

Army Cook during World War II

It's no exaggeration to say that thousands of people enjoyed the culinary talents of Grafton's Chuck Kirst, first during his stint as an Army cook and later as a broiler cook at many local restaurants, including the Grafton Hotel. Though he passed away on May 22, 1999, he is still remembered fondly by many, including his wife, Sally, and his daughter, Char.

Chuck was drafted in 1941 when he was 24. At the time, he was working as a toggler humper at Armor and Leather Co., which was a tannery in Sheboygan. He originally trained in the infantry and as an intelligence scout, but he had an injury to his hand during basic training. It was a good thing because the rest of his unit went on to

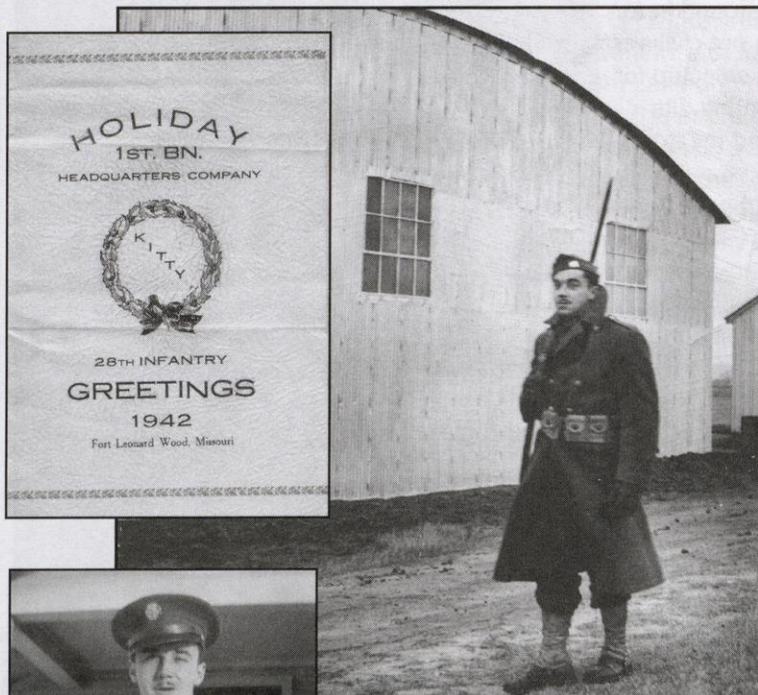
Europe. He lost a lot of friends because many of the guys in his unit were from Sheboygan, and if he hadn't injured himself, he may not have come home either.

Instead, he was assigned to another outfit where he became a cook. He talked about the fact that he would cook for 10,000 soldiers a day, a little more than 3,000 at each meal. He would talk about making scrambled eggs and potatoes in very large amounts for them.

He served in the United States for awhile, but eventually did end up in the European Theater for 23 1/2 months. He was stationed in France and England, and took a bakers and cooks course in Metz, France.

Chuck and I met while he was home on leave before going overseas. He knew my older sisters, and I remember I met him when I was walking to work one day. He knew my friend's name and called out to us. We started writing at that point, and I was also writing to other soldiers, too, but we all did that. I remember that sometimes a word or two would be blacked out in his letters - they were censored. He also sent me a bouquet of flowers for a holiday - I think it was Easter - and he brought me back souvenirs including painted silk pillows. I got to know his family very well while he was gone. You could say we had a wartime romance and we did fall in love through our letters.

Chuck also talked about the fact that at one point, he was part of an American group that took over a hospital in Regensburg, Germany. They worked with the local religious brothers at that point to take care of the injured soldiers. Chuck mentioned that while he wasn't on the front lines, he did see quite a few injured soldiers.



(Above) This picture appeared in *The Sheboygan Press*, 1941. It was sent to the paper by the base in South Carolina with the tag line "a northern soldier in a southern blizzard," though there is no snow shown in the picture. (left) Chuck at home in Sheboygan. (Above left) The holiday menu for PFC Kirst's unit started with roast turkey and ham, snowflake potatoes, giblet gravy, candied sweet potatoes and ended with cigars and cigarettes.



He was honorably discharged as a TEC 4, though he did serve in the National Guard after that and he would go to summer camp every year. I don't think Chuck originally intended for cooking to be his career, but that's what he did. After he came home, he started out working at the Steer and Stein [now Mille's Spaghetti Factory], then eventually at the Grafton Hotel. He brought a lot of the military with him in the kitchen: Everything had to be orderly and in place.

Service to our country now seems to run in our family. Four of our sons served in the military and so have three of our grandsons. Chuck joined the Catholic Veterans and the Rose-Harms Legion Post, though he couldn't attend Legion meetings for many years because he cooked at night. After his health started to fail and he retired, he was able to attend the meetings, and he served as the Post Chaplain for a long time.

Member of the Signal Corps in Vietnam

Chuck grew up and lived on a farm in Ozaukee County, attending grade school in Kirchhayn and graduating from Cedarburg High School. He was the second of seven boys and his brother, Rod, was profiled in the first Back from Duty book. Chuck was working at Doerr Electric in Cedarburg and still living at home on the farm before being drafted in March 1969. He served until October 1970.

Being drafted was pretty definite and I thought, "If they want me, they can come and get me." My oldest brother also had been drafted but never went overseas because only one son from each family was sent over.

We had to meet in Port Washington and we took a bus to Milwaukee. I was sent off to Ft. Campbell, Ky., for basic training and then on to Ft. Gordon, Ga. where I received infantry training. Just before that happened, I had a mishap with a hand grenade. They had us training side by side, quite close. Part of the training - other than rifles - was that we were to learn how to throw the grenade over your head from your backside. I guess I was off to my right just slightly - or the guy on my right moved, I really don't know - my finger got between my grenade and the guy's steel helmet.

It split my right little finger up to the first knuckle and I needed surgery. They put it back together - it took some time to heal - and it was quite good. I got all my feeling back and it's just a little flat on the end.

While this delay was in place, they had to change my call orders for infantry. The rest of my group left and I stayed behind. The majority of them were sent to Vietnam and I went back to the camp and more or less hung around until I got new orders. I was then sent to Saigon in September 1969 where I became part of the Signal Corps.

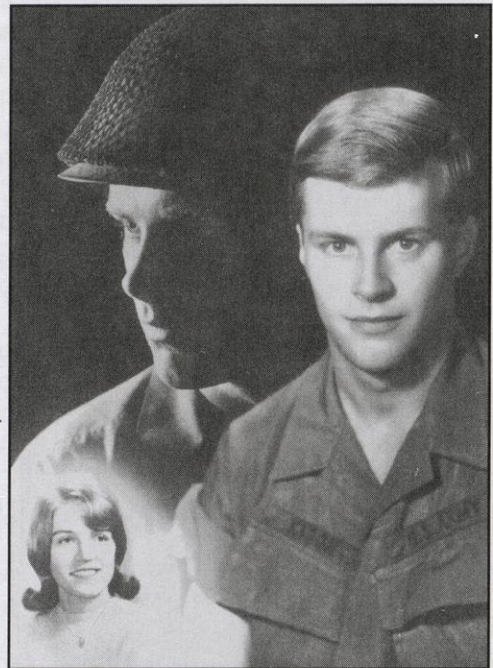
The Signal Corps was in charge of worldwide communications. In Vietnam, we did teletype to the different troops. We were right on the northwest edge of Saigon at Ton Son Nhut Air Force Base. I don't know how my large fingers ever really fit on the typewriter. Sometimes I did a little better than "two finger" typing if the words weren't too long. We worked 12 hours on, 12 hours off, seven days a week.

When we weren't working, we could bum around a little bit. We'd get into town and go through the little shops. People were trying to make a living selling caps and handmade things as well as little souvenirs. We supported them. They did have small places to eat where they would catch fish out of the creek. But, there wasn't any sewer system in Saigon (everyone goes in the Saigon River). I have to admit, though. They did cook one heck of a fish sandwich there. They served dog and other types of animals, too. Vietnamese chicken wasn't very tasty, though. Their chickens ate ground and junk, so they didn't have much flavor.

We'd occasionally get a day or two off, though we'd have to put in for it. We'd go to different places. We could take Lambretta papasans, which were a dad driving a bicycle with a little box on the back, to nearby towns. You had to pay the papasans for your ride - they always wanted to be paid in military payroll currency (MPC). When they had MPC, they could buy our products at a store. We weren't really supposed to give them our money because that would allow them to buy our supplies. But we wanted them to have some of our money because we did hire ladies to do our laundry and cleaning back in the barracks. If we gave them our money, they could go to the store to buy our soap.

If you felt a little adventurous, you could also wait by the heliports and catch a ride to wherever you wanted to go as long as it was on their route. Several hours later they would come back and take you home, but there was no guarantee you would have a return ride. You didn't want to be AWOL. It was kind of neat. We'd fly over rice paddies and see the farmers and the water buffalo cultivating rice. Sometimes the pilots would decide to tease them a little bit. They'd fly lower and the noise would scare the water buffalo, which would then lay down. Sometimes they'd stay down for days.

I put in for a 30-day extension when my year of duty was just about completed. By extending my tour of duty in Vietnam for the additional 30 days, I would qualify for an early out. This meant getting back to the States with less than six months left in my two years and so I was discharged when I came home.



This photo montage of Chuck and his fiancée, Donna, was created in Saigon by a Vietnamese photographer in 1969. Chuck and Donna had known each other since grade school and were engaged when he went in the service.

Steve "Doc" Klotz

Field System COMSEC Repairman

The last year of the Draft - numbers were pulled in Fall 1971 - my number was 10. It was the only time I was ever a "10" in my life. I guess I was following in the footsteps of my Great-uncle Ernst, a World War I veteran and a founding member of Post #355 in Grafton, and my dad, Harvey, a World War II veteran. Before my dad passed away, I asked him what he did at D-Day. As he was fluent in German, he was assigned to a B-17 bomber, and they would fly over enemy territory listening for any German conversations.



Steve's draft number was 10, so that guaranteed at least a few years in the military.

On D-Day morning, they had a brash new pilot who wanted to take off right away without warming the engines up. As soon as they were airborne, they had engine trouble over England and the plane was about to crash. My dad woke up in a hospital and asked, "What happened?" Apparently, he landed on a stone fence and was knocked out. So much for his D-Day experience, but he lived to see another day. For me in 1971, my mother (God bless her soul) asked if I wanted to flee to Canada because the Vietnam War was going on. I said, "No, I'll serve my time in the military." As I looked back on this, I think she didn't want anyone to go through the hell she went through as a young German woman during World War II: Surviving the bombing, seeing people get shot, having herself get hurt, etc.

I reported to Port Washington on April 28, 1972 and started basic training on May 4 at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo. You know how they say to never volunteer for anything in the service? Well, during the first week of basic training they asked if any of us were born and raised on a farm. About eight of us raised our hands; we became the company "truck" drivers. What this meant was that every other day or so rather than marching, running or exercising, we would drive the trucks behind the company and pick up the guys that had fallen. Once, when we were sent out on a night exercise, I was driving a truck along with two drill sergeants. We were all drinking beer while we waited for my company to make it through the mud, mosquitoes and ticks. By the end of boot camp, I think there were only three of us truck drivers left, so we were driving nearly every day. Since I was increasingly driving the truck, I missed all the map reading exercises and drills. I did not have a clue how to plot a map and I feared the worst as we were required to "pass" a test to leave boot camp. Thankfully, the two drill sergeants that I had drank beer with that night came to my rescue and helped me with the test.

After a 15-day "vacation," I reported to Ft. Monmouth, N.J., for further training on July 24, 1972. About 20 of us were going to be Field System COMSEC Repairmen (31T30). I didn't have a clue as to what that was, but was told it had something to do with cryptograph equipment. Thirty-eight weeks of school later, I knew what a 31T30 was! We repaired circuit boards that were used in scrambling communications. School was held in a secure building with guards and bars on the windows for four and a half days a week. When I graduated in April 1973, there were only five of the original 20 or so left. Due to holidays and my other leaves, when I graduated, I only had one year of service time left - I thought the government had spent a lot of wasted money on me.

After graduation, I was sent to Ft. Riley, Kansas. I never again did see the equipment I was trained to fix. Every day I reported to a secure building which had large safes in it for storing other cryptograph equipment, which we distributed daily for training purposes. Though I had Secret Clearance, I was denied my Top Secret Clearance, due to my East German mother and my uncle, who still lived there. At the time, it was part of the Soviet Bloc.

As I was in a critical MOS, they offered me \$10,000 to re-enlist for another six years. I would be stationed in Germany which actually had a depot to fix the equipment I was trained on. Since I had used up all my leave by coming home whenever I could, they granted me a 3-day pass so I could talk it over with my parents. I had no intentions of re-upping, but just wanted to go home again. When I returned, I took my three-month "early out" - I had to pay them back for my 3-day pass - and I spent one year in the Army National Guard in Waukesha. I was honorably discharged January 1975.

I think I pretty much "skated" thru my military career. I have a lot of great memories, and was proud to serve, but I just couldn't stand the Army Green anymore. Thanks to my time served I was able to purchase my first house, with my wife Mary, by using a V.A. loan. To this day I still get choked up, and a tear in my eye whenever I see Old Glory pass by or hear the Star Spangled Banner.

Rebecca Kohls

As interviewed by her mother,
Vicki Schanen

Combat Medic in the Army Reserves

Becky had started drilling with the 452nd Combat Hospital while still in high school in Grafton. She was working at Lasata and was a good student at school. She decided that though she wanted to go to college, she didn't want to fail. Instead, she decided to take some time off and decide what she wanted to do. Her mother had been in the medical field; her father had been in the military and, in her words, she "mushed" the two together. Reserve soldiers could not go to basic before turning 18, but they could drill with the rest of the unit. She left for basic training three months after graduating from high school.

I remember we were allowed to stay in a hotel the night before we actually left for basic training and that the placement testing we took was really difficult. There was one section where they told us not to worry if we didn't know any of the answers because they were testing for higher intelligence - for codebreakers and CIA intelligence sort of people. We did have the option of picking where we fit based on our scores. We scored pretty high, so we decided we wanted to be nurses.

I do remember I showed up with a pretty wild hairstyle: Half a head of hair (I had shaved half of my head) and I had dyed it black. I wasn't very military ready, at least I didn't look it.

I joined with my best friend, Tammy. We went in on the buddy system: You went into basic training together and could get the same jobs. I was sent to Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri (Ft. Misery, as we called it.). After basic training, I was sent to Ft. Sam Houston for medic training and then four or five months of nursing training. I purposely failed a test because I was homesick.

I found out that I had a real problem with needles. We had to practice on each other in training. I still do to this day. I fainted a couple of times in training. It is probably one of the reasons that when I came home, I never did pursue a career as a doctor. I liked being a CNA, I liked caring for people, but it was the blood that I didn't like.

However, at that point, I was qualified as a medic and I went home to the 452nd as a medic. I drilled one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer at Ft. McCoy. Most of our drills were held at the facility on Silver

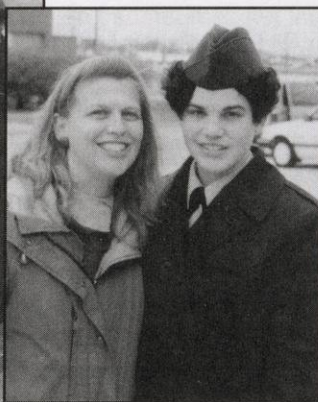
Spring Drive, but sometimes we would go to Milwaukee County Hospital. There were a lot of civilian doctors and nurses in our unit and we would accompany them. However, the staff at the hospital wasn't too willing to let weekend military people come in and screw things up.

During our summer drills at Ft. McCoy, we would set up in a field and pretend we were at war. We'd have fake casualties, colored-smoke grenades and blanks. Sometimes the wounds would look quite real. We'd assess the wounds, do triage and get people back behind the "front lines," which was where I was. It was our job to get them to the hospital.

When I moved to Chicago, I transferred to the 300th Postal Support Unit in Chicago. I was still a medic but they were going to train me to be a postal assistant. Our unit got called up to go to Bosnia and I was picked to go, even though I wasn't qualified. They said, "What better training!"



(left) Rebecca was her company's guidon carrier during basic training. She actually had to sleep with it in basic training.
(right) Rebecca and her mother, Vicki.



I ended up transferring to an engineering unit in Darien, Ill., which was where I finished up my commitment as a medic on September 14, 2001, three days after 9/11.

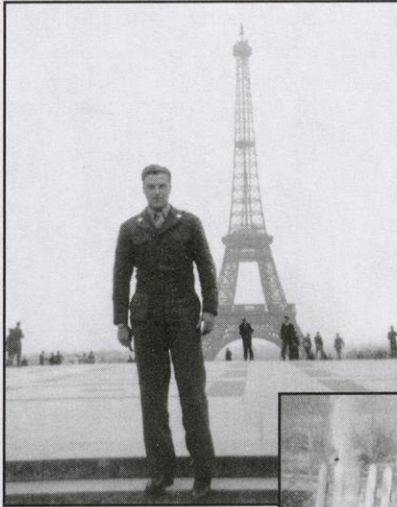
That day, I could see a big orange packet in my mailbox that day that said, "Department of the Army" and I could see that there were orders in it. I opened it about 24 hours later, I thought I was being called up, but the orders said, "You are hereby ordered to be honorably discharged." About a week later my patriotic duty kicked in and I started thinking about re-enlisting. If it wasn't for my brother calling and saying he would join if I did, I probably would have. I didn't want my little brother to go.



Rebecca served with the U.S. Army Reserves from 1993 until 2001.

Military Police Administrator in the Eighth Air Force

Virginia, Minnesota native Raymond Kolocek served with the U.S. Army Air Corps from October 27, 1942 until December 27, 1945. In his home town, high school graduates were expected to go on to Virginia Junior College, which was the next step prior to going off to a university. However, after a year and a half of junior college, he and a group of his friends decided to head off to California and work in the aircraft factories because war was imminent and they knew they would likely find work out there.



(above) It was a happy visit to France for Ray - he was discharged from Paris in October 1945.
(left) Here's Ray on his 1942 Harley Davidson in Colchester, England, 1945.



There were four of us who drove off to California. I received my draft notice when we were in San Diego and I hitchhiked back to Minnesota. After I returned home, I was walking down to the draft board and ran into one of my high school buddies. He said, "Why don't you enlist? Then you can pick your branch of service." I decided I wanted to be in the Air Corps.

After I finished training, I was transferred around quite a bit. I had written down that I had taken typing in 9th grade, so I was put into administration. I ended up in Atlantic City, N.J., and they were starting a new cadre of Military Police (I call it "Minnesota Pollock" because I kept bragging about the fact that I was one). I was put in the cadre as the administrator, which meant that I did reports, payroll and so forth. At five months of service, I also became a staff sergeant. But that was as far as I ever got in terms of rank as well. Oh, well.

We were sent overseas because the Eighth Air Force needed a military police force. Our intention was to become a military police company once we arrived in England, which occurred in 1943. I would stay in administration, though, I wasn't a military policeman doing law enforcement.

However, when the military was doing convoys and getting ready to invade Europe, we did do convoy duty. We would ride Harley Davidsons. I never drove motorcycles after I

returned home; I'd need a sidecar now if I tried to drive one! I still do have the motorcycle endorsement on my driver's license, though.

We were stationed in Colchester, and there was an Eighth Air Force Base about 10 miles out of town. We did work at the base, but we also did work in and around Colchester.

We lived in a regular house in Colchester. We had bedrooms upstairs and a kitchen, so we could go and make ourselves a sandwich if we wanted to, though the food wasn't that bad on base. It was a private house that the military had taken over. We had about 20 people in the house.

Because we were living in an English town, we did experience some of the culture. I remember eating fish and chips. Coming from Minnesota to England was quite an adventure for me. The winters were different than northern Minnesota, that's for sure. Instead of lots of snow, we would get lots of rain.

One day there was a knock on the door and there were a girl inquiring about a soldier. I didn't know him, but I started getting acquainted with her. She was working in a hospital in the area. One thing led to another and on November 24, 1944, we got married! We didn't move in together; she stayed at her home with her family and I saw her on the weekends. My wife showed me around her country. We went to places like Cambridge.

After you were in so long, you could go back to the states and get discharged. I wanted to stay awhile, though, even though the war was over. When my enlistment was up, I decided to take a civilian job with the war department in Germany. I thought it would be better for my wife to stay in England with her family while I was there. I was a civilian, but I worked with the 150th Ordnance Department.

When the time came to return to the States, my wife and I had to take different boats. I had to go on a military boat. I arrived back in the States first and she followed shortly thereafter. I stayed with someone I had worked with in Germany who now lived in New Jersey. When I got to her apartment, she had a big sign that said, "Welcome home, Arnold!" (which was for someone in her family). She had added below it, "And Raymond." I thought that was pretty nice.

Anthony K. Kranitz

CIOR teammate and Commanding Officer in the Coast Guard

Anthony Kranitz had just graduated from college with a degree in Electrical Engineering in 1971 when he decided to enlist in the Coast Guard. He knew the draft was "biting his behind" and he decided it was a very good time to be proactive about the situation.

I'd always wanted to go to sea and my hope was that I'd get an assignment on an ice breaker. I wanted to see the North and South Poles and I knew because the Coast Guard travelled so much, they offered decent liberty. But my first assignment was shore duty at the Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C. My actual job was computer programmer and I used the old punch cards to do my work. It was pretty amazing - we shared this super huge computer. It was nothing like what computers are like today.

However, I also spent three months out of every year training as part of the Confederation of Interallied Reserve Officers (CIOR) competition. Every NATO country would send six three-man teams to compete each year in shooting (rifle, pistol and submachine gun), swimming, orienteering and an obstacle course.

The first year we were competing, President Nixon wanted to cut the military, specifically the Coast Guard Reserves. We had a lot of pressure to do well, and because we did, we've always joked that we saved the Coast Guard Reserve.

In the three years that I participated, we always came home with a trophy or award. In fact, I set a course record one year. I liked the competition itself, but we also had the opportunity to travel because, in those three years, we traveled to Italy, Norway and Greece.

After I finished being on active duty, I joined the drilling reserves. My first unit was out of Green Bay and then later I was in Kenosha. Our unit did a lot of search and rescue and other types of work on Lake Michigan, but because I was an officer, I worked out of an office and a variety of duties, including training and payroll.

That didn't mean that it didn't sometimes get interesting. One weekend I ended up being the duty officer for all of Lake Michigan for a 24-hour period. It was January or February and there was a blinding blizzard. I thought, "What on earth could possibly happen? Nobody is going to be out there." We had five vessels under way during that period: A freighter full of diesel, a fishing tug and three Coast Guard cutters. Before the night was out, two of the five vessels had to abandon ship in the ice.

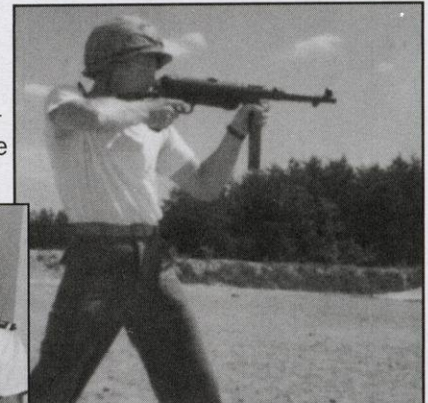
Two of the cutters were with the freighter in Green Bay. The freighter could break the ice, but it couldn't turn. The cutters would go ahead of the freighter and break up the ice when it wanted to turn. Well, the ice shifted and picked up one of the cutters at a 20-degree angle. It broke all the windows in the cutter. The crew went hand-over-hand on a rope to a buoy tender. The next morning, when they could actually see where they were and what was going on, they were able to refloat and re-man the cutter.

I did have the opportunity to travel a bit in the Reserves. We trained on the East Coast, in California, Key West and even Adak, Alaska. We were three miles from the end of the world up there. We were testing out a 22-foot Raider boat there and we wanted to see how it did in heavy seas and winds. It didn't do well at all.

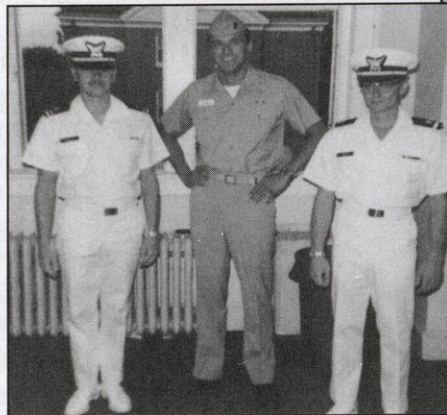
In 1990, we became the first Coast Guard Reserve Unit (PSU303) ever involuntarily recalled to war. Part of my job when we were recalled was to find my unit. It was the opening weekend of bowhunting season and they were all over the Northwoods. We went down the call list and tracked them down, even the guy who was on an elk hunting expedition.

We ended up going to Ad Daman, a Saudi Arabian port. I later found out that it was No. 2 on the Iraqis' target list for SCUD missiles. We patrolled Ad Daman with our Raiders, which were equipped with 50-caliber machine guns on a tract. It was hard to stop a Raider and virtually impossible to sink it.

We didn't have much to do with the Arabian people; we were pretty isolated. It was interesting because they are a very curious people and they would sometimes just show up to see what we were doing. They didn't mean any harm, but we had to be very cautious.



(Above) Tony shows off his form in the CIOR competition, 1972. (Left) Members of the award-winning American Interservice team at the CIORS ceremony: Ltjg Smith, 2nd Lt Brant and ENS Kranitz.



Refueling crew member on the USS Caloosahatche

Saukville native Victor Krause attended barber school before joining the Naval Reserve in October 1965. He was half-way through his barbering apprenticeship when he joined. He has since returned to his original career and can be found at Vic's Barber Shop in Cedarburg.

Once I was officially part of the Naval Reserve, I had to attend three-hour meetings on Monday nights for a year. I went to the Southside Armory in Sheboygan for those meetings. During that year, I also had to attend basic training at Great Lakes for two weeks. I had the misfortune of being there in January and February, too. I remember we



Victor served with the U.S. Naval Reserve from October 1965 until October 1971. He joined the Reserve with the expectation that if he didn't, he'd be drafted. (left) Here is the USS Caloosahatche at work refueling another ship.



had to wash our clothes and hang them outside and they froze solid.

In May 1966, I had to go back for two weeks of Shore Afloat School. We boarded a ship in Sturgeon Bay and we had to take it to Great Lakes. We could see the shore the whole time.

In October 1966 I had to go on active duty. I boarded a bus in Sheboygan and made a 25-hour bus trip to Philadelphia. When I got there, I thought I could save a little money by taking the subway, but I got lost and ended up taking a cab to the Naval Training Station anyway. I made it; I wasn't AWOL right away. I sat in that station for six weeks. I came home once - it was my first plane ride - to spend time

with my buddies. I knew I was going overseas: My orders were for the USS Caloosahatche AO98 in the Mediterranean.

We spent some time in Naples before we were sent to Athens, Greece for a night. We were then to fly to Ismir, Turkey. There were six of us on this real little plane in a big storm - the plane fell about 1,000 feet and we were puking. We returned to the Air Force base in Athens and tried a second flight. We arrived in Ismir around midnight. I do remember there were a bunch of guys from the Caloosahatche coming off of a "wild boar hunt." They had shot some Turkish guy's cow and there was big excitement over that.

We never trained for anything specific. We knew that we would get some kind of duty when we got aboard ship. I spent the next 17 months of my life on the Caloosahatche, which was an American Oiler. It was medium-sized as far as ships go: Bigger than a destroyer but smaller than a carrier. We fueled other ships at sea.

When it was time to refuel a ship, we'd pull up alongside of them, but about a couple hundred feet apart. Everybody was hopefully going on the same course at the same speed. We'd start out by flinging a real thin rope with a weight on it to the other ship. They'd pull on that rope and eventually they'd have a big, fat hose over there. They'd connect it up and we'd start pumping the oil. We also had JP5 (jet gas), which was very flammable and we had to be really careful with that. And sometimes we'd have to go into port and refuel ourselves.

Refueling was actually fun when the seas were calm and the weather was nice, but when it was rough, it wasn't much fun. I was a ropeman, which required me to stand there and hold a rope. One time, I had a watch ripped off my arm because the rope slipped out of my hand. Sometimes we'd have ships refueling on both sides of us when the weather was beautiful.

As far as where we went, we cruised back and forth all the way to Spain from Ismir. From the first week of December 1966 until April 1967 we cruised the Mediterranean Sea. After that, we came back to the United States. The Caloosahatche then went on a Caribbean cruise and on a much longer one from Newport, R.I. to the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa. We crossed the equator and that was quite a big deal. Our hair was too long and we had "charges" brought against us. We had to kiss the Royal Boatswain's belly (which was smeared with Rice Krispies) until you admitted your guilt. I had to stand the Great White Whale watch in my wool pea coat - at the equator - with a pair of tin cans for binoculars. There were a couple of other things we had to do as part of the initiation. We were no longer pollywogs. We were shellbacks.

I also celebrated my 21st birthday while we were on that cruise. I didn't tell anyone though. Sailors are weird when they've been out at sea for a long time.

Col. Victor L. Krzycki, ret.

Served in the CBI Theater during World War II

Mequon's Victor Krzycki was drafted into the Army on March 26, 1941. Though he initially had no interest in a career in the military, this Milwaukee native ended up serving 37 years, retiring from the Army Reserves in 1978. He recently completed his memoir, "Me and the Rendezvous." Excerpts of this book were taken to complete his profile.

Draft time was not something I looked forward to, but I knew it would eventually happen. I had three uncles who served in World War I, including one uncle who served in Russia and Siberia. When I was drafted, a one year obligation was required of us, and we were all counting the days. However, some of us also read the newspapers and listened to the radio, so we weren't all that surprised when our obligation was extended in September 1941.

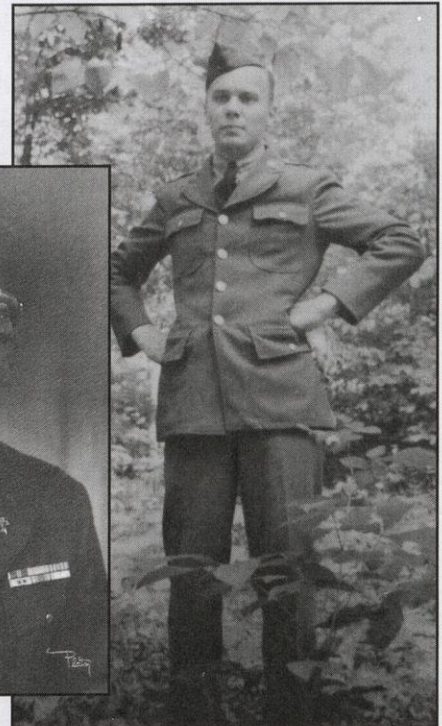
When Pearl Harbor was attacked on Dec. 7, 1941, I was a private in Company G, 53rd Quartermaster Regiment (HM). We were stationed at Ft. McPhearson, Atlanta, Ga. And that was the main reason why I survived the attack on Pearl Harbor. I remember we had gone to the movies, which is something we often did on Sunday evenings. That was where we heard that Pearl Harbor had been attacked, I said, "Where is Pearl Harbor?" Some clod got up and said that all servicemen should report immediately. We never saw the movie and the theater never offered to return our money. And from 1941 until 1946, all of my Christmases would be spent away from home.

I graduated from Quartermaster Corps OCS in November 1942. My classes had not concentrated on the traditional quartermaster functions, but rather on motor maintenance and convoy operations. After I completed a 60-day course on Motor Maintenance and Convoy Operations, I became a truck company officer and was assigned to the 472nd Quartermaster Truck Regiment and became a platoon leader. After training our new recruits, we headed for Camp Stoneman, Calif., a staging area for units deploying overseas. We were on our way to some unknown part of the world to fight this nation's war.

Eighty-seven days later, I disembarked from the SS Samore and signed into the U.S. Army Headquarters in Calcutta, becoming part of the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations and I eventually became part of a Quartermaster Truck Company. We ran truck convoys on the Assam Access Highway and the Assam Grand Trunk Highway.

It was there that I had an opportunity to observe the Indian people when I passed through the towns and villages. By and large, they kept very much to themselves. They did not look at us nor did they show much curiosity about what we were doing. Children, however, were an entirely different matter than the adults. Whenever our convoys would stop for lunch, children swarmed all around us. While they may have had the worldwide curiosity of children, their main interest in us was the empty cans from our C rations.

I later went on to serve in China and managed truck convoys that hauled munitions and aviation fuel to our airbases and military supplies to the Chinese. I always rode in the last truck of a convoy. Though our Field Manuals strongly "suggested" that the convoy commander should lead a convoy of trucks, I did not like the suggestion. One of the reason I rode in the back is the scarcity of manpower; I would be available at the end of the convoy to take over, if necessary. We also had a rule that if a truck broke down and could not be repaired or towed, the driver had to stay with the vehicle and protect its cargo until the truck could be moved, no matter how long that took. That failed to recognize that we were not operating in an area where AAA was operating 24-hour road service. The area that we operated in was rife with bandits, Chinese Army renegades and followers of local warlords. Despite the rule from on high, I determined that I would never leave one of my drivers sitting on the side of the mountain at night. I was in the best position to "bend" the rule, pick-up the driver and hope that in time our truck would be recovered.



(Above) This photo is a self-portrait of Victor in 1942. (Right) Col. Victor Krzycki retired from the U.S. Army Reserves in 1978.

Thomas Kuenstler

As told to Vicki Schanen

Guard at the Panmunjom Peace Talks

The youngest of six children in a Illinois farm family, Thomas Kuenstler remembers his older brother serving in France during World War II. Tom would go on to serve at another historic place in the next major world conflict a few short years later.

When my brother came home he started to farm with my dad, so when I turned 18, I decided to go to Milwaukee to find work and live with my aunt. I started working at the A&P Tea Co. and was with them for almost four years before I was drafted into the Army. I later worked with them for a total of 32 years.

I waited until I was drafted because my mother would never have let me volunteer. My brother had served in France, and she had lost a brother there. I had four close buddies in Milwaukee and all five of us were drafted at about the same time. Two of us went to Korea, one to Alaska, one to Japan and one stayed as cadre at Ft. Leonard Wood. We all returned home.

At that time if you were drafted you automatically went into the Army unless some other branch of the service needed men. I reported to Ft. Sheridan, Ill., on Jan. 15, 1951 and waited to be assigned. While I was there I was given night fire watch during one of the coldest winters ever. I had to go around and shovel coal into the barracks furnaces.

They gave me several chances to volunteer for special duties, Airborne units and other special units. My brother had warned me never to volunteer unless it was for something I really wanted. I finally received orders on Jan. 31, 1951 and was sent to Camp Gordon, Ga., which was to be my home for the next 14 weeks.

After my basic training and military police school, I received a 15-day delay en route to get to San Francisco. I had some time to spend with my parents and also time to get to Milwaukee to see my future wife. It would be 19 months before I saw them again.

Our training company was supposed to ship out as replacements for the 24th Division. They had too many troops scheduled for the ship, so we were delayed. During that time, I was on KP duty for breakfast. Four of us placed bread on racks to be toasted in one of four mess halls, so you know how many soldiers there were.

We finally shipped out and, 14 days after leaving San Francisco, we arrived in Yokohama. There we received new rifles and had three days to clean them up and sight them in at 500 yards.

We then boarded our ship and a few days later landed at Inchon, Korea. It was a shock to see the destruction of war and how the civilians had to live. We went on to Seoul to a replacement depot. This is where our training company was split up; very few ended up as military policeman and I never met up with them again.

My guardian angel was with me and I was assigned to the 558th Military Policeman at the Eighth Army Headquarters at Teagu. Part of my duty there was with the honor guard at the cemetery as the KIAs came in each day. That was when I realized how many men were giving up their lives to protect a country so far from home most of them, including me, had never heard of. I was there from July until October 1951.

I received notice that I was selected as one of 15 MPs selected as guards to go to the peace talks that were soon to start at Panmunjom. I went back to Seoul and was fitted with three different uniforms: Winter, summer and field fatigues. At that time they had not decided which we were going to wear. We were given training on what to do, how to do it and how to act while we were there. Then we went to the base camp at Munson.

The peace talks started on Oct. 25, 1951 in a tent in the middle of a 1,000-yard circle, in a no-man's land between the Marine and North Korean lines. It was not a very comfortable feeling sitting out there. The only weapons we had were .45s and four men would stay while the rest of the platoon returned to base camp and returned the next morning. It was easy duty because the talks never went beyond noon and sometimes only for five minutes. There was always some disagreement to break it up for the day.

We patrolled one half of the circle; North Koreans the other half. Both countries posted men at their separate entrance from the road and into the tent as well as the road leading into the 1,000-yard circle. In case something went wrong, we always hoped the Marines would get there in time to get us out.

I ended up staying at Panmunjom for nine months. At the end of June 1952, I was transferred to a combat MP traffic platoon with the Second Division around Old Baldy. I remained there until I was sent home in December and was discharged in January 1953.



Tom served with the Army from January 1951 until January 1953.

Donald Laine As told to Vicki Schanen

Radar Repair Sergeant

Conneaut, Ohio native Donald Laine was a three-sport athlete in high school and had received a football scholarship to Marshall University in West Virginia. He went to summer football practice for two weeks before he decided to quit.

Two fellows on the football team came up to me and said they were going to quit (there were guys quitting left and right). They wanted to go to a smaller college because they thought they'd have a better chance of starting. They also told me that they'd been watching me during practice and they'd like me to come along. I said, "Okay." Once we got in the car, I realized what a dumb idea it was. I didn't want to go anywhere in West Virginia. I told them to just drop me off at the bus station.

When the bus went through Cleveland, I saw a recruiting office for the Marine Corps. My coach at Marshall was an ex-Marine, and I did like him a lot: "I'm going to join the Marines!"

In 1948, you could join for one year if you were 18. I served my year and played football at Parris Island. I could really kick myself when I think about it. I was playing football for nothing when I could have been playing it in college. I was sent to Auto Mechanics School.

Once my year was up, I went home. Then the Korean War broke out the following year. I was part of the Inactive Reserves and got called up.

Unfortunately, to the Marines, I was a good candidate to be a radio operator, which was about the worst job you could have. You were in the infantry and ahead of everybody else - you had to see the machine gun nests, the bunkers and the pillboxes. They said the average radio operator lives about five minutes in combat.

I tried to get my assignment changed. I said, "No, I'm really an auto mechanic!" But it was too late. I did get issued a jeep, though, because I had a Marine driver's license. I had the most powerful and heaviest radio around and all the officers would come and use it.

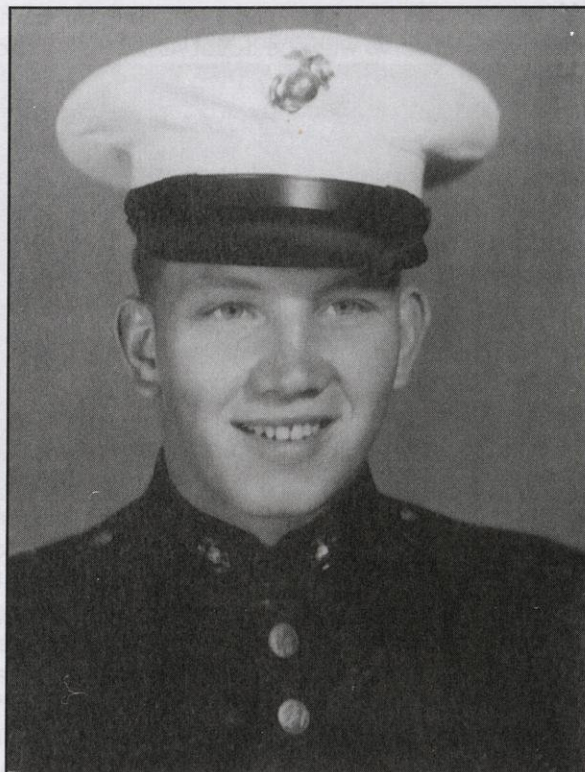
One day they put a notice on the bulletin board: Volunteers wanted to take tests for electronics school at Great Lakes. Must be proficient in math. I thought it was my chance to get out of Camp Lejeune because I knew we were heading to Korea. I was budding around with three guys and they saw my name on the list so they scratched my name off. I came back and quickly wrote it on again. As soon as I got done, a corporal came and took the list. It was that close. I went to Great Lakes and my buddies went to Korea. I wrote letters to them, but they never wrote back. I don't know what happened to them.

I attended electronics school at Great Lakes. My class had 14 Marines and about the same number of sailors. Most of the Marines went to Milwaukee on liberty. A few went to Chicago. I met my future wife, Carol Tank, at the Milwaukee U.S.O. After I graduated from Great Lakes, I was sent to the Marine Radar Repair School at San Diego, California.

After graduating from Radar Repair School, I was given a 30-day leave. I flew back to Milwaukee to marry Carol. I was then ordered to the Second Marine Air Wing at Cherry Point, N.C.

The United States had a radar ring around the country to guard against Russian planes and missiles. I was assigned to the radar ring radar set. My job was to repair the radar set quickly when it broke down. My tour of duty ended in April 1952.

I graduated from UW-Stout and taught tool-and-die making at Moraine Park Technical College for 25 years. I am now retired and live in Cedarburg with my wife, Carol. We raised four children and have nine grandchildren.



Don served with the USMC from August 1948 until August 1949 and from August 1950 until April 1952.

Kyle Lallensack As told to Vicki Schanen

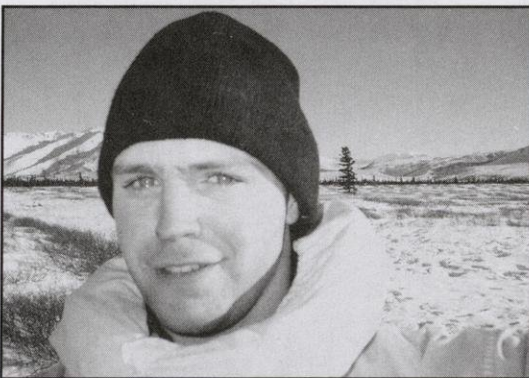
Army Infantry in Alaska

Kyle Lallensack served with the Army from May 1996 until September 1999. He then continued his service as a member of the Wisconsin Army National Guard from September 1999 until December 2004. He was on terminal leave from a two-year stint on activated status when this interview was done in January 2004.

Prior to entering active duty, I completed a year of college. I realized that wasn't really what I wanted to do. I really went thinking I wanted to go to college, but I wasn't really focused on it. I enlisted in the middle of my semester but, because I went in under the Delayed Entry Program, I didn't have to report until May.

I really never looked at any other branch except the Army. My father [next page] served in the Infantry and I told the recruiter that was what I wanted to do, but I wanted to be Airborne Infantry. My dad hadn't been Airborne though he did serve with the 101st Airborne. He told me he never saw a good reason to jump out of a perfectly good airplane.

I reported to Ft. Benning, Ga., for basic training. I spent 13 weeks on Sand Hill for basic and AIT before Airborne School. The worst thing I remember about Airborne School was the "airborne shuffle," the really slow run they made us do. I almost had to drop out because my knees were in so much pain.



Kyle served at Ft. Greely, Alaska. Here he is in 1999 in the Donnelly Drop Zone.

We had a ground week, a tower week and a jump week. In ground week, we learned how to do our PLF (parachute landing fall), which was learning how to fall without anticipating the ground. There were five points of contact: Feet first, then side of calf, then your thigh, then your butt, then your rolling shoulder. We were taught to be limp, with our knees slightly bent and our hips crouched. When we hit, we had to let our body fall naturally onto those five points. You'd roll onto your shoulder, pull your feet around and unhook yourselves.

After I finished Airborne School, I went home on leave. Then, I reported to Alaska. I thought my assignment had been totally random, but when I was looking in my records from when I enlisted, and I realized I had requested Hawaii, Germany or Alaska. I reported to Ft. Richardson, which is the headquarters for 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne Infantry Regiment. It was actually the

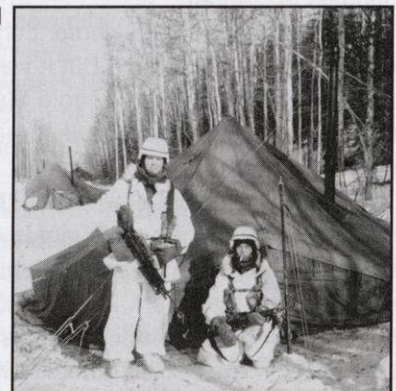
same unit my dad served in while in Vietnam, so that was both neat and a little weird.

When I got there, I found out that I would be a "five-jump chump" because I ultimately only spent two days in an Airborne unit. They had too many privates, so I was sent to a light infantry unit in Ft. Wainwright, which was even colder than Ft. Richardson. It's about 100 miles below the Arctic Circle. In mid-October there was already two feet of snow.

We started each day with physical training, and we almost always ran outside. We'd report for our duty day around 9. There would typically be some sort of training focus for the day. We had nights and weekends to ourselves. In my first company, I was an assistant machine gunner and then I became a radio-telephone operator for a RECON team. In my final year in Alaska, I was in a support platoon and worked as a platoon sergeant's driver in addition to setting up the radios.

I was discharged in September 1999. When I returned home to Wisconsin, I went back to college and decided to major in criminal justice. I also joined the Wisconsin Army National Guard because I still had a four-year commitment. I had to drill once a month and two weeks over the summer. We usually went to Ft. McCoy, but once we went out to Gowan Field, Idaho. We helped facilitated training for the Idaho National Guard; we played the enemy.

During this time, I also got mobilized under the support of Operation Noble Eagle, which was to bolster security at the airports. I was mobilized in support of the Air Force's airbases. Since 9/11, their security forces have been deployed all over the world and they were quite depleted back on base. They activated us - we were called Task Force Red Arrow - and I was at the 128th Air Refueling Wing. It was a convenient mobilization for me because I only lived 15 minutes away, but I only had one semester left of college and couldn't continue on at that time. When we first started, we worked 12-hours on/12-hours off shifts, three days on, three days off for the first nine months. The final year and a half of my two-year activation I was on a set schedule so I was able to finish college through night school.



Kyle is standing next to his tent at Ft. Greely during squad lanes, 1999.

101st Airborne Recon in Vietnam

Dick Lallensack felt the draft was probably inevitable after his high school graduation, but he was able to receive a four-year deferment while he pursued a journeyman gearcutter apprenticeship. Less than a week after his apprenticeship ended, he received his letter and was officially drafted into the Army on April 20, 1970.

After I completed all my training, I shipped out of Oakland, Calif., on May 18, 1970 to Vietnam. After two days of “in processing” at Long Binh, a bunch of us got orders for the 101st Airborne. A military hop on a C-130 took us to Phu Bai way up north just south of the DMZ. Everyone had to go through one week of SERTS (Screaming Eagle Replacement Training Section) training. After I completed this training in June 1970, I was assigned to the Recon Platoon of the 1/501st Infantry Battalion of the 101st Airborne Division.

Our Recon Platoon normally worked in six-man teams, sometimes as a full platoon and occasionally attached to a Line Company. The 1/501st was working off Fire Base Kathryn and my first helicopter ride of many took me out to my Recon Team. It rained buckets all that first night; I never thought the sky could hold that much water.

Four weeks or so later I was given command of my own Recon Team. As a six-man team we were out to gather info—watch and report back what we found and saw. We normally would not engage the NVA and quietness, sneaking around and stealth was normal procedure. A six-man Recon Team, often without a machine gun, didn't have the fire power to sustain a fight of any length of time. When we were attached to a line company they scared us: We whispered, they talked and didn't seem to worry about making noise. They basically dared the NVA to engage them. Near mid-July 1970 we went in for stand-down.

In the 101st we spent seven weeks out in the jungle and then one week in the rear. Stand-downs were like a vacation and believe me, we needed it! Around the fifth day of stand-down, at a briefing I learned that there was going to be a multi-battalion assault into the Ashua Valley, a place loaded with NVA. Our artillery and mortar support would be coming from Fire Base Ripcord and the “ammo supply” was being beefed up as they spoke. It sounded ominous and our stand-down was extended several extra days for medical classes and logistical planning.

We were getting ready to have an evening “beer party” a day or two later and all of a sudden there was lots of commotion going on. Something big, details were sketchy and rumors were plenty. My lieutenant caught up to me, “Sarge, something's going on, don't know what yet, but be aware of it.” About 15 minutes later we went “on alert” and 20 minutes later we got the word: We were moving out! We eventually learned that a Chinook helicopter was shot down on Ripcord as it was bringing in ammo and crashed into the Ammo dump and literally blew off the entire south end of the hill. There were five infantry companies around Ripcord relying on its support. The only ammo available was what they had in their gun pits.

The multi-battalion assault was now impossible and another fire base had to be opened for needed support. Two to three hours later, Fire Base Gladiator was opened with a battery of six 105mm howitzers in place firing support for Ripcord. My Recon team, with three new guys, was walking off Gladiator about 6:00 that night into the mountainous area west of the fire base. It was intense, it was difficult, and I have thanked God hundreds of times for allowing me to come out of there alive. That first week off Gladiator I averaged two hours of sleep a night. I was so sleep deprived; I was beginning to have difficulty concentrating. Somehow we made it, somehow we lived!

And then there was the helicopter pilots. My hat goes off to you guys. When we were in need of support the “woop, woop, woop” from the choppers, be it a Huey or a Cobra gun ship, was a God-sent sound; help was seconds away. To this day, when I hear a helicopter, I can tell if it is a Huey. I will NEVER forget that sound.

Many years later, I happened to come across the July 23, 2001 issue of *Sports Illustrated*. It caught my eye because the cover showed someone on what looked like a Fire Base in Vietnam wearing a 101st Airborne patch. The soldier on the cover was Bob Kalsu, and All-American Football player from Oklahoma who went on to be the Buffalo Bills rookie of the year and then was drafted into the Army in 1968. Bob Kalsu was killed on Ripcord three days after the Chinook crashed into the ammo dump. He was the only pro athlete to die in Vietnam. I learned that I was about 13 to 14 kilometers from Ripcord the day he was killed.

My son, Kyle, enlisted in the Army in 1996 in the Airborne Infantry, where he jumped out of perfectly good airplanes. One day Kyle called me and he was quite excited, “Dad, I just got assigned to the Scouts!” I told him I didn't know what that was. “Dad, you were a Scout! Scouts are Recon; I'm in the Recon Platoon!” Yes, almost 30 years after I was in Recon, my son was, too.



It's hard to be comfortable in the jungle, but Dick is sure trying here off Firebase Gladiator in Vietnam, August 1970.

George Lampert

Fought with Patton's Third Army in the Battle of the Bulge

Most people recognize George Lampert as the former mayor of Port Washington and a supervisor for Ozaukee County, but there was a memorable point in his life where he wasn't reporting to his constituents. He gave a report to General George Patton.

There was that song, "Be Back in a Year, Dear," but when Pearl Harbor was bombed, that was it. You were in for the duration. There was quite a bit of excitement. We were put on high alert, given live ammunition and told to bivouac out into the countryside and wait for the Japanese to attack. The Third Division stayed out there until around Christmas. In early 1942 we moved to San Diego Bay and trained for the North African invasion by climbing up and down nets. In May our division was ordered to start a new cadre and it was sent to Camp Rucker, Alabama to start the 81st Division. We were then ordered to start a second new cadre later than year, and that's how I became part of the 87th Division and headed to Europe.



George Lampert served with the 87th Division during World War II.

Our transport ship, the *Louis Pasteur*, was the sixth-largest passenger ship in the world, which was liberated from the French by the English. There must have been 4,000 of us aboard. We had no protection, so we took this zig-zagging route across the Atlantic. It was eerie. We were afraid to look over the side and see a submarine.

We reached LeHavre by November and were in the Battle of the Bulge a month later. It really was the height of fighting. When we were in Luxembourg, we set up camp in a country club. We soon discovered that they still had German beer on tap. I also remember seeing American soldiers being buried in mass graves in at the Hamm National Cemetery Luxembourg. It was an assembly line process. They dug long trenches and lined the bodies up in them.

I was part of the 312th Combat Engineer Battalion, 87th Division and served as the battalion's sergeant major, master sergeant. I was the highest ranking non-commissioned officer in a battalion of 1,000 men, which was the best job you could get because the only person in the entire battalion you had to take anything from was the colonel. In this position, I acted as the liaison between the colonel and the enlisted men.

I was running the command post because all of the officers were gone and General Patton pulled in to check on the 87th Division in Spring 1945. He got out of his armored car wearing his pearl-handled revolvers. I saluted him and gave him my report. He listened and nodded, but then gave me an order: He told me to shave. I thought Patton was arrogant, but a good leader. I think he would've gone all the way to Russia if they would've let him.

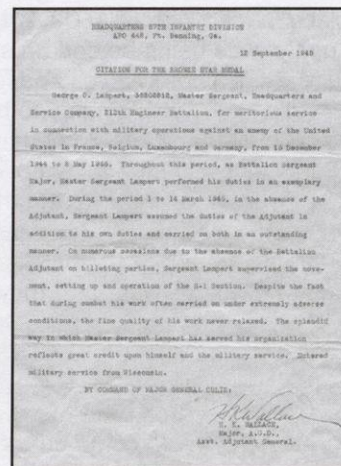
After the Battle of the Bulge, we pushed through Europe. I was involved in the Rhineland, Ardennes and Central European campaigns. We really saw the devastation of war. Death was everywhere and there were Germans all around us.

One night we sent two guys out on patrol. The next day we found them in a ditch, frozen. I also remember investigating an explosion that killed 21 men who had been sitting in on a briefing. A whole platoon was wiped out. We didn't know what happened, but thought maybe a shell hit their truck filled with land mines.

The Allies would send bombing raids on clear nights. Thousands of planes would come in and just level the Germans. We would go into the towns and there would be bodies of people and animals in the streets and rubble everywhere. I also remember being in the European countryside and seeing the sky light up with German tracer bullets because they were strafing our convoy. There was nothing we could do. If a truck in front of us got hit, we had to push it off the road and keep going.

We eventually made our way into Czechoslovakia, and that was when the Germans surrendered. I remember shaking the hands of Russian soldiers. We were all quite relieved. The 87th Division ended up leaving Europe on July 4, 1945. After we came back, I went on furlough and married my wife, Janet. We were scheduled for the invasion of Japan, but we dropped the bomb, and that was the end of that.

I was never wounded, but there are a lot of others who weren't so lucky. I was not a big hero. We were just infantry men shooting and getting shot at. I have no regrets. I'm proud of the job we did over there. After four years and eight months, I was glad to be home.



He still owns the paperwork for his Bronze Star citation.

Robert E. Larson

Military Policeman in the Marines during the Korean War

Chicago native Bob Larson started his military career in the reserves while still in high school. In quick succession, events happened the summer after he graduated, and he eventually found himself on active duty, stationed at Freedom Village and the Freedom Gate Bridge in Korea.

We went to summer camp at Camp Lejeune on June 24, 1950 and the Korean War started the next day. I was 17 in boot camp - I didn't turn 18 until the last week - so they couldn't send me overseas. Instead, I was assigned to a naval supply depot near Salt Lake City, Utah. The Marines took care of the external security around the depot. It was choice duty, like being in a small family, and a nice area to go out in when we had free time. We also ate really well. I found out that all services were supposed to follow the same menu, and we had it really well. If the menu specified "fish," we had fresh rainbow trout that had been caught in the area.

Once there were two young Marines who just wanted to go out at night and they got put on mess duty because they weren't pulling their weight. One of them said, "If you guys don't get off of our backs, we're going to go over the hill," which meant AWOL. Well, one of the cooks made them a dozen sandwiches and gave them six apples and six oranges for when they went over the hill because he was glad to get rid of them. Nobody ever found out about what the cook did, and that's a good thing because he would've been in serious trouble.

We also had one sailor in the brig who went over the hill to work his uranium claim, which was a four-day trek into the mountains. If he didn't work his claim for 30-days a year, he would lose it. When the FBI went to find him, he said that if they just let him work his claim, he would come out at the end of the 30-day period, which he did. I asked him if it was really worth it. He said if he was able to keep it, once he got out, he'd never have to get a job.

In December 1952 the order came down to transfer one corporal for further assignment. I had just made sergeant, so I didn't qualify. But then the order came back that I qualified and my transfer came through the day after Christmas. I was part of a replacement draft and was sent to Korea in April 1953

I was stationed in an MP Company at Camp Casey, which had just been built. I did patrols in a village called Little Chicago. We were patrolling to keep the Marines out of the villages. On my first patrol I saw a butcher shop with no electricity or refrigeration, and it had fresh meat hanging in the front window. I said to the guy I was patrolling with, "Is that a little deer?" He said, "No, that's a big dog."

The Koreans ate dog as part of their regular diet. We worked with some Korean Marines as part of our patrol. They lived in nearby villages. One of them had a pet dog that he always brought with him. Unfortunately, his dog happened to get run over by a truck while he was away, and I ended up shooting the dog to put it out of its misery. Some of the other Koreans picked up the dog and made it for supper. The next day, I asked the guy if he ate supper when he came back, and he did, saying it was very good. The guy ate his own dog!

After the cease fire, the MP Company worked Operation Big Switch which was when the United Nation's POWs were repatriated. Every day I patrolled to keep the road open from the north side of Freedom Gate Bridge to the DMZ for the ambulances to get to Freedom Village. This was where the POWs went to counterintelligence to be debriefed. Some were ambulatory, some were on stretchers, but they all got needed aid there.

A corporal in the MP Company had a brother in the Army who was stationed in Seoul when the war started. He was listed as a POW. The corporal worked at Freedom Village and checked the list of POWs coming back the next day. His brother was listed to return the last day of Big Switch along with Army General Dean.

That night the Provost Marshall told the corporal he would take him to Freedom Village in his jeep and gave him a pass to stay with his brother as long as he was in Korea. When the Colonel came through, we all came to attention and saluted him as a thank you.

After I was discharged, I returned home to Chicago and joined Electric Post #769 of the American Legion and I served as post commander in 1968. I am still a member of that post though I now live in Saukville. I am also a charter member of V.F.W. Post 7588 in Port Washington, where I served as commander in 1995-1996.



Bob Larson (center) and his friends at a going-away party in 1950. Bob's spit curl would soon be history.

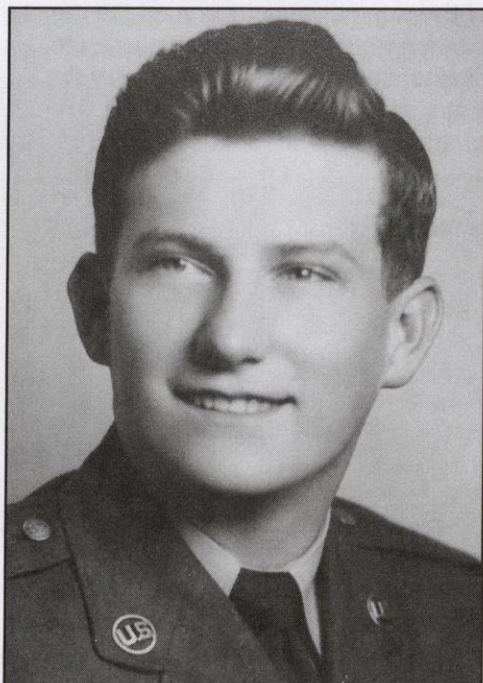
Stanley D. Larson As told to Susan Smith

Mess Hall Sergeant

Mr. Larson served in the United States Air Force and in Korea between January 1951 and January 1955. When not discussing history, Mr. Larson may be traveling the country roads in his Model A with his wife, Pat. He can also be found behind the counter at Larson's Paint and Wallpaper in Cedarburg.

At the height of the Korean War, I was working at a milk processing plant when a buddy of mine suggested that we enlist in the Air Force. By 12:30 the next day we were on our way to basic training at Shepherd Strategic Air Command base in Wichita Falls, Texas, with nothing more than the clothes we were wearing.

Eight months after my first assignment at Maguire Air Force Base in Trenton, N.J., I was bound for Korea. It dawned on me only when passing Alcatraz and sailing beneath the Golden Gate Bridge that I was really on my way. When we arrived in Pearl Harbor, we docked next to the Arizona. So many of us crossed over the deck to view her, it seemed our own ship tilted. Later we watched with reverence as the Navy Honor Guard, in summer dress, lowered the Stars and Stripes during taps and with a rifle salute. The ceremony made a lasting impression on me.



Stan served with the Fifth Air Force, 58th Fighter-Bomber Wing in Korea.

Shortly after, on a train from Tokyo to Fukuoka, Japan, word spread like wild fire that we would be passing through Hiroshima. Through the windows on both sides of the train, we saw the decimation. A barren landscape dotted with twisted metal structures that were skeletons of buildings. Being able to see both Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima etched in my mind the sacrifice and valor of men who came before me.

I was assigned to K2 Air Force Base, Fifth Air Force, and 58th Fighter-Bomber Wing. Our outfit was a bombing and support wing for the ground troops so we were not particularly close to the front line.

Working as a night mess sergeant, I worked from 5 p.m. to 7 a.m. We found that in the kitchen, we had to be creative. For one thing, our cooking was done with field ration stoves and some of our food items were leftovers from World War II. Fresh ingredients were rare. The kitchen area divided the mess hall between officers and enlisted men. In the officer's mess, the pilots played the films taken during actual air combat for study and critique. When one of our planes fired a gun, a mounted camera took a recording. The F-86 was not the plane the Russian MIG was and the films demonstrated the unbelievable talent our pilots possessed. They may have been the first "Top Gun."

Our base was patrolled by Air policemen and trained dogs. Watching the training of the dogs was an interesting diversion. There were also Korean Police on the base. Many Korean kids would work for minimal pay at the base, mess hall included. One of my duties was to search the kids before they left the base. In the pant pocket of one teenage boy, I discovered a can of black pepper. Soon, Air Policemen and Korean Policemen came over to investigate. The Korean police berated the boy at length verbally which I thought was too much over a can of pepper but then they got physically severe. I had a little brother at home about the same age and my heart just sank for this kid. Fortunately, I never found myself in that situation a second time. It certainly illustrated a distinction between American and Korean police procedure.

In April 1952, my orders came to go home. I spent a thirty-day furlough in Oregon, Wis., (my hometown) and during that time I met the woman who would eventually become my wife. My next assignment took me to the SAC base in El Paso, Texas. Coming from my time with the 58th fighter-bomber wing, a serious but not rank-focused outfit, this was a real change. Saturday morning flight inspections every week in the hot, hot sun. Again, I volunteered to cook.

When I returned home from the service, I joined my dad in the paint business and married Pat, the woman I met while on furlough. Later I took to the other side of the paint business, and worked for Mr. Mautz, selling paint. Today, my son, Dave, and I continue working in the paint business together.

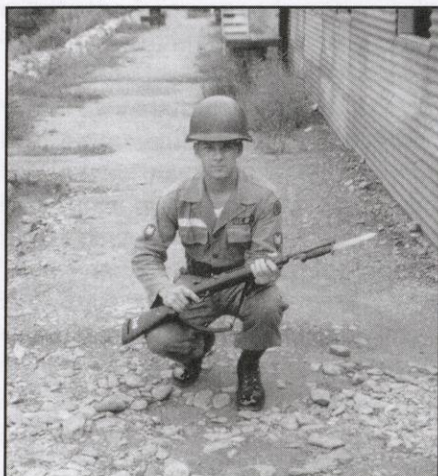
Every war is different. There are different parameters, conditions and circumstances that vary with each conflict. In Korea, we fought in primitive conditions and sub-zero temperatures. Although war brings hardship, it also brings opportunity. I traveled to parts of the globe that I would never have been able to see. From what I experienced in Korea, I developed a unique perspective of the world. The American military is truly awesome. It is an honor and privilege to have served and a blessing to have returned in good health.

Jim Lee

Served in Korea with the Inspector General's Office

In January 1953, I attempted to join the Army at the age of 16 but I was turned down, as my parents would not sign for me. Therefore, in March 1953, I enlisted in the Army National Guard in Oshkosh. After my enlistment and physical, I was then assigned to Company H, 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Infantry Division, commonly known as the "Red Arrow" Division. I remained in the National Guard until I enlisted in the Army on Sept. 10, 1954.

After my enlistment I was transferred from the Milwaukee Induction Center to Ft. Leonardwood, Mo., to attend basic training. After I completed necessary preliminary tests and medical screening, I was eventually assigned to Company C, 86 Reconnaissance Battalion of the 6th Armored Division where I remained for the next 10 weeks.



Jim outside the Inspector General's Office in Inchon, Korea, August 1956.

After basic training, I was assigned to the Advanced Heavy Weapons Infantry Training at Ft. Dix, N.J. I finally arrived at Ft. Dix in January 1955 to begin the eight week course, which covered all aspects of infantry heavy weapons, which included advanced military field training during the wonderful snow-filled winter months.

After I graduated from this training, I was assigned to attend the infantry's Officer Candidate School at Ft. Benning, Ga. While waiting to receive my orders, I spent two months as a military police guard at the local Army stockade where I guarded prison work details. In OTC, I was assigned to Company A, Training Battalion. I was totally taken aback by the rigid adherence to military rules and regulations, not to mention the strict physical duress and harsh dress codes.

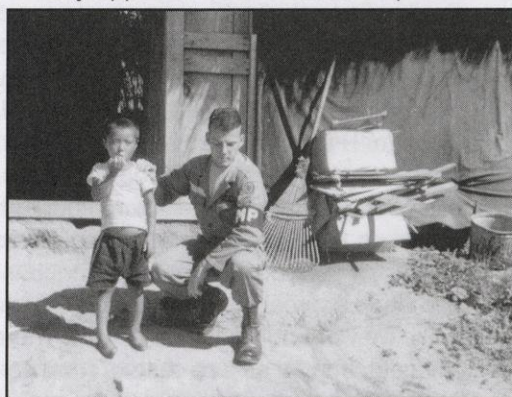
The school was a 21-week course, if you were fortunate enough to complete the final phase of the training, as the drop-out rate was 70 percent or higher. The course included all aspects of weaponry, military life, code of justice, level of command, leadership ability and skills to become a successful officer. There were no excuses, mistakes, lack of military bearing or inability to adapt to the structure of the system. Unfortunately, I became one of the fallen statistics and was released from the OCS training facility after 15 weeks and remained on post to attend paratrooper jump school shortly thereafter.

At that point I was attached to Headquarters Training Center as a clerk/typist while I awaited reassignment. During my stay at the company, I was selected to represent the company as its candidate for "Soldier of the Month" for three consecutive months. I was fortunate to receive this honor for two straight months for the battalion. The selection was based on military knowledge, weaponry, military appearance and leadership skills. I was presented before an officer's board of review for their final vote and selection.

I was hoping to receive an assignment to an Airborne unit, either in the States or over in Germany, but my hope was to no avail as my orders read Korea via Ft. Lewis, Wash. I was given a 30-day leave prior to my reporting to my new station to await deployment to Korea. I spent two weeks at Ft. Lewis being processed and receiving all my shots. We boarded the troop ship General Mann, which left Seattle in February 1956. I spent the next three weeks serving as a chaplain's assistant aboard ship for the military dependents.

We arrived at Inchon, Korea in March 1956. My orders read to report to a heavy weapons company, 24th Infantry Division, which guarded the DMZ next to Freedom Village. I spent two months patrolling the DMZ until I was assigned to the Inspector General's Office at 24th Division Headquarters. I was their shorthand expert and clerk/typist. My primary job for the next 16 months was to accompany the officer staff to investigate complaints by military personnel concerning their rights or a violation of said rights. I was also assigned the duty of permanent C.O. [commanding officer] for the safe documents and lived in the office, though I was assigned to the Headquarters Company.

I left Inchon in July 1957 and returned to Ft. Lewis where I received my final orders to ship to Ft. Sheridan for separation and discharge from the Army on July 1957. I was then assigned to the Army Reserve on inactive status for the next four years until October 1960 when I was "finally out."

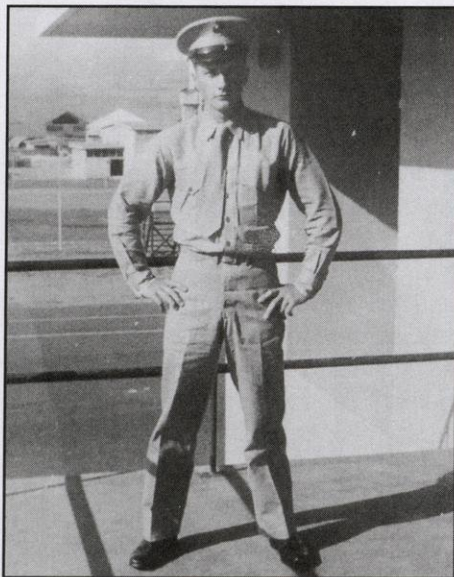


This picture of Jim, who temporarily served as an MP, was taken at the 38th parallel in Korea.

One of the "Chosin Few" in the Korean War

Imagine fighting a war in a place so inhospitable that the weather and terrain are every bit as hostile as the enemy. Imagine fighting a war amid towering, snow-clad mountains, deep in enemy territory and the end of a narrow, winding, icy road that is the sole link to your base of supplies more than 70 miles distant. Imagine fighting a war where the thermometer sinks to 35 degrees below zero and a wailing wind drives howling blizzards straight from the polar icecap. Imagine fighting a ruthless, fanatical enemy who outnumbers you by more than five to one. Imagine all these things, and you have the situation that Saukville resident Math Linden faced in late 1950.

In November 1950, 8,000 fighters, most of them United States Marines, struggled to survive in the coldest winter in 100 years in North Korea. Surrounded by 120,000 Chinese soldiers, our only lifeline was a 15-foot wide, steep mountain road called the M.S.R. (Main Supply Route) that led to the port city of Hungnam. From Yundam-ni at the northwest corner of the Chosin Reservoir, the MSR was a 78-mile journey to the Sea of Japan.



Math served with the 5th Marines in Korea.

By Thanksgiving Day, our regiment (the 5th Marines), were relieved by the 31st Infantry so we could move to the west side of the reservoir at Yudam-ni preparatory to passing through the 7th Marines and then leading the advance to Mupyong-ni.

As night fell on November 27, tens of thousands of Chinese soldiers came out of hiding, attacking us and the American soldiers at all points around the Chosin Reservoir. The Chinese swarmed the hills, coming within yards to toss grenades at us.

My company, Charlie Company, moved into position at Hills 1240 and 1282 on North Ridge, where a company of Chinese from the 235th CCF Regiment had lodged itself on Hill 1282. In a hand-to-hand night assault, Charlie Company won back the hill.

By the following night, our battalion pulled back to relieve and reinforce the 7th Marines and the perimeter tightened. The Chinese were blowing bugles and whistles and banging on gongs, cymbals and drums while they shouted, "Marine, we kill!" and "Marine, you die!" The assault battalions of the CCD 79th and 89th Divisions launched massed attacks

against units of our 5th and 7th Marines. The exploding shells and high-explosive rounds, as well as the thousands of muzzle flashes, revealed swarms of Chinese surging up the bare hillsides toward our Marine lines. They still came on; when one fell, another took his place. You couldn't kill them fast enough.

By the end of November, it was increasingly obvious that the UN troops could not hold back the Chinese and that a massive amphibious evacuation would be needed from the Port of Hungnam.

As Hagru-ri came under heavy attack to the south of the Yudam-ni valley, we pulled back. It took us three days to traverse the 14 miles from Yudam-ni to Hargaru-ri. The attack continued and we encountered a never-ending succession of roadblocks and attempted ambushes. As we battled our way southward, the temperature dropped to 35 degrees below zero. During the nights of December 2 and December 3, six inches of snow fell and visibility was only a few yards.

The leads approached the Hagaru-ri perimeter at 1900 on December 3. Though we were marching into Hagaru-ri, we were not ready for a fight. There were hundreds of wounded Marines and hundreds more dealing with the cold. I had a severe case of frostbite by this time.

During the next three days as we regrouped, replacements and supplies were flown in. More than 4,000 casualties were evacuated. While this effort was going on around the clock, the bulk of our division began preparing for the next stage of the attack to the south.

We encountered resistance every step of the way. In a continual running gun battle, position after position was swept aside and ground under as the Marines fought our way from Yudam-ni to Hagru-ri to Koto-ri to Chinhung-ni and eventually to the sea. Shortly after midnight on December 12, the first serials of the 1st Marine Division entered the LST staging area at the port of Hungnam.

I spent some time in a hospital ship in the Hungnam harbor before being flown to Otsu, Japan for additional recuperation time. I was able to return to the United States later that year and was discharged from the Marines in September 1951.

Carpenter and Mason in the Army Reserves

Mandi joined the U.S. Army Reserve about a month after she graduated from high school in 1993 and served until June 2001. A friend of hers from high school had been planning to join the military. Mandi tagged along with that friend to the recruiter's office and it was there that they learned about the military's buddy system.

We thought this would be a great idea. I wasn't sure if I was ready to go to college yet. I thought I wanted to do something different and the opportunities the military offered seemed more in line for what I wanted to do. The training they offered did not take that long - I would only be away for four months and then I could start college the following spring. I was only 17 at the time, so after cajoling my parents that this would be a very good idea, they gave me permission to join.

We went down on a Saturday and went through all the testing, medical exams and counseling and then we were sworn in. It was such a big commitment that they wanted us to make sure we knew what we were doing. My group went in first and my friend's group followed us. My friend - the one that I was going to go in with on the buddy system - decided that day that she wasn't going to join the military, so a few weeks later I went in on my own. In the long run, going in by myself was probably better anyway. It forced me to meet new people instead of relying on a buddy.

I was sent to Ft. Jackson, S.C., for eight weeks of basic training. The class that I was in was the first co-ed basic training class in the military. Until that point, they always had the males and females separated. Most of the classes on the base were still separated, but we were the first training class together. To be honest, I think this also made basic training quite a bit easier than the other classes because the drill sergeants didn't quite know how to do it. The men and women interacted all the time, and they weren't quite sure how to handle it at that point.

I went on to Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., for my advanced training, which was not co-ed. I was a 51 Bravo - Carpentry and Masonry, which was the job I chose during enlistment. I chose that for, among other things, the \$2,000 signing bonus. I thought it was also something I could put into use down the line. I enjoyed the masonry more than the carpentry.

You can always use carpentry skills and, in this area, we only have so many reserve units and there isn't a significant variety of jobs available. You still have to drill with a unit after training, so you do have to pick something that will fit into the Reserve units in the area. I also wanted to be part of a unit that didn't have a significant risk of being called up because I was going to college. In the 75-some year history of my unit, it had never been called up and wasn't called up until the Iraq War, where they spent nine months. I felt very guilty when I heard about their activation. You still develop a sense of obligation and feel you should be there for your fellow soldiers.

I returned to Grafton the day before Thanksgiving 1993. I was assigned to a unit in Pewaukee before I left since it had an opening at the time. Even before I went to basic training, I had visited my unit with the recruiter. I reported for drill in January 1994. Most of the time our monthly drills were Saturday and Sundays from about 7 a.m. until 5 p.m. Sometimes, we would also have to report on Fridays, but that was not very frequent.

We would do a variety of things during our drill weekends. A lot of times they wouldn't have specific jobs for us to do; on those days, it was more a matter of not being seen and keeping busy. They didn't have enough for us to do most weekends. Each month, we'd go out and do vehicle inspections. You could get a military license so you could drive five-tons and HUMMVs, which I did do. They would try to keep all the jobs in one platoon, so for example, they'd put the vehicle maintenance crew in one platoon. I remained a 51 Bravo but I did different things on drill weekends. A lot of the men in our unit were carpenters and masons in real life, and we were more of labors doing what they needed us to do.

Sometimes we'd do things around the community, such as building a structure at a park. We also once built a retaining wall. We built a new handicapped-accessible bathroom at the Summerfest grounds. It took us about a year, from one winter to the next. We worked on it one weekend a month. Had we been called to active duty, as the unit was, we were earmarked for the building of tent cities and the cleanup after a war.

Two of my summers I did my annual training in Germany. The first time we went to Hohenfels, Germany, and we put up buildings for war training. When I enlisted, I had no idea I'd be travelling to Germany. One year, I couldn't go to annual training because I was attending a summer school class, so I had to make up my time. They were willing to make exceptions for valid reasons. If we did the training in the States, it was two weeks. When we went overseas, it was three weeks. Our particular unit had also trained in Panama, Belize and Samoa.

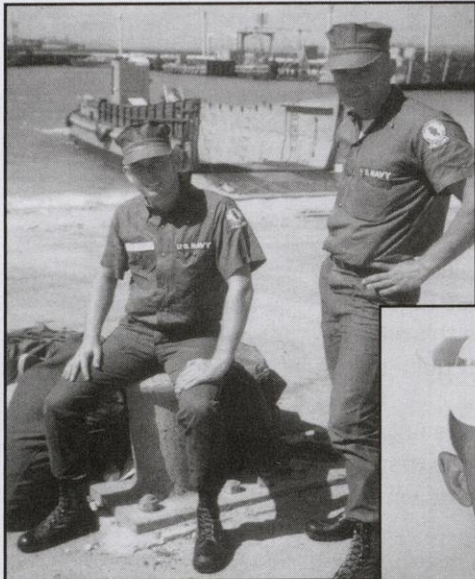
I spent six years on active Reserve duty and two years inactive before I was discharged. I'm good with a hammer now and I'm a little more handy than I probably would have been had I not gone in the military. I know how to drywall and I'm very good at demolition.

Ronald McReynolds As told to Vicki Schanen

Naval Underwater Demolition

Platteville-area native Ronald McReynolds was going to Chicago's Moody Bible Institute with a 4-D deferment as a divinity student. His grades dipped and he had to go to night school, which resulted in a change in his deferment status. The inevitable draft notice soon followed for the 24 year old.

When I was a little guy, my uncle was in the Navy. He and his wife had given me a couple of sailor suits when I was a kid and I always wanted to be in the Navy. My cousin went into the Coast Guard - we'd talked about going in together - but I failed their color test because I couldn't perceive shades of brown and red. I left the Coast Guard office and went right to the Navy office and passed their test. [Ron laughs]



(above) Here is Ron with his good buddy, Vern Williams in DaNang, Vietnam, 1967. (right) Ron served with the Navy from February 1966 until November 1969.



My other cousin, who was five or six years older than me, had gone into the Navy and talked about the underwater demolition team. I always had that in the back of my mind, but I also thought I'd never make it into the teams. In boot camp, they hold tryouts for the teams. I took the tests in boot camp, but didn't find out if I had made it or not.

After boot camp, I received orders for the USS Bryce Canyon, a destroyer tender in Long Beach. I'd only been there a few days when I did receive the orders for underwater demolition training in San Diego at the amphibious base. The orders were a good surprise.

We had about five months of training, always in seven-man teams. We ran everywhere we went on base. In that time, we had extreme physical training. For example, we had to complete a mile-long swim in the ocean to earn our fins and we practiced going in and out of the surf in a seven-man life raft. There was also classroom work and at the end, we learned demolitions. We did practice operations, and then we started using the live stuff. We were training for our main job of beach reconnaissance.

We rotated with another team and went overseas on March 7, 1967. After a stop in Okinawa, which included jump school, we then

went to Subic Bay, where I was assigned to the USS Weiss. We did operations off of South Vietnam. I also later went on shore and worked out of DaNang. While there, we did some demolition work on Monkey Mountain.

I was part of a two-man team in Chu Lai. We had various operations there. Not all the things we did were of a combative nature. Sometimes boats would come in with barbed wire around their screws and our job would be to remove the barbed wire so they could continue to operate. We'd dive on underwater pipelines and oil lines that ran out into the ocean. Ships would come in and tie up to buoys before attaching to the pipelines. This would allow them to pump the oil inland.

Our main job, however, was still water and beach reconnaissance all around Vietnam. If it was a friendly beach, we'd have a guy on the beach and people spread out 25 yards apart about 500 yards into the ocean. We'd move parallel to the beach and taking soundings every 25 yards to check for obstacles in the water. This helped us find potential landing areas for the Army and Marines. The beaches had to be redone every six months because things would change so much, such as shifting sand. Once we did recon, we could go back and make an actual map of the bottom.

After I returned to the States, I went on leave and got engaged. We were married before I went back overseas in 1968. My wife moved to California. She was a teacher and taught when I went back overseas a second time.

The second tour I flew directly into DaNang. From there, I went to many different places and had a number of short-term missions. My job duties were similar to my first trip to Vietnam.

We got back to the States on March 11, 1969 and I re-joined my wife in Coronado, Calif. We had a nice little apartment. They did encourage me to re-enlist. I had the opportunity to go to OCS, but I felt that to have a family life, it wasn't the direction I wanted to take. While there were things I didn't like about the Navy, I did enjoy it. It was one of the most fulfilling times in my life. I did get to do a lot of exciting things.

Gerhard "Gary" Mader As told to Vicki Schanen

M60A1/A3 Tank Commander

Though Grafton's Gary Mader was born in Alberta, Canada, he became an American citizen and went on to serve in the U.S. Army from 1972 until 1990. The son of German immigrants, he moved to Milwaukee with his family in the 1960s.

I went into the military right out of high school. I wanted the education benefits. I was in the first wave of the new volunteer army that started at the end of the Vietnam War. They offered me five years of paid college if I signed up for four years of service and two years of inactive duty. If there was World War III, they could still call you up for those last two years. The pay rate also went way up for the volunteer army at that point.

I kind of knew what I was getting myself into. I went to Ft. Knox, Ky., for both basic and advanced training in armor. In order to get some of the available benefits, you had to sign up for the combat branches: You had to be a shooter. The other options available to me were infantry and artillery, and I wanted to ride rather than walk. Plus, even in my teen years, I had developed an interest in military history.

My dad had served with the German air force for 12 years and put in three compulsory years with the Canadian army. He had seen combat and he wasn't really happy with the fact that I went in the Army. He never shared much about his own experiences until the last couple years of his life. It was part of his past.

The only thing that seems a little unusual about my experience is that a number of people there were prior service - they had been to Vietnam, gotten out and decided to come back into the military. A lot of them had been drafted for two years before they came back and were very happy when Vietnam ended during the last couple days of our training.



In 1975, Gary posed for this picture in Hohenfels, Germany. He was part of the CSC 2nd Bn 68th Armor, 8th Infantry Div (Mech). Here he is with M113 PC with "paint-by number" camouflage.



Nothing comes between a soldier and his tank. Here's Gary in 1982 at Ft. McCoy as part of the 2nd Bn, 84th Rgt., 84th Division (TNG).

I spent my active duty in Germany - February 1972 until September 1976. Because I was in the volunteer army, I requested Germany and I received it. There weren't many overseas places for us to go other than Germany (Alaska wasn't considered an overseas command). I was fluent in German and that helped me both at work and in my free time.

When I left the base, I could blend in with the German economy. I did live off post for the last couple of years. I made friends with some of the Germans and we still send e-mails and Christmas cards to each other. I don't have an "American" accent but my haircut would give me away. Various commanders used me as an interpreter and the higher command did try to get me as an interpreter, but my tank battalion would never release me. They were very short handed and really needed me in a tank. West Germany was sadly neglected in terms of manpower and

equipment. We witnessed the rebuilding of the U.S. Army after Vietnam.

As for what I actually did: We would chase each other through the woods on scheduled maneuvers in Germany, though we would occasionally do unscheduled things like chase sheep around. One of the guys in our platoon once took a wrong turn and couldn't figure out where he was. When he came out of the woods, he was rolling through a vineyard - right through the grapevines. The farmer was chasing him and unloading his shotgun as fast as he could load it. The guys in the tank just closed the hatches and kept going. Much of our work, even in the Reserves, centered around shooting and maintenance of our tanks.

I had a buddy who served with me in Germany who was originally from Appleton. He left a year before I did and he said, "When you get out, just go in the Reserves. It's a nice paycheck." I was in the Army Reserves from October 1976 until December 1990. I actually received two honorable discharges - one in 1978 when my original commitment was up and the second when I left the Army Reserves.

Fred Marion

Ball gunner during World War II

Fred Marion Jr. flew 50 missions with the 414th Bombardment Squadron, 97th Bomb Group during World War II, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross and Purple Heart on his 29th mission. Mr. Marion died in 2001, but his widow discovered nearly 25 pages of written memoirs, which she graciously shared for this project.

To some extent, previous training determined gun position on the plane. The engineer operated the top turret; the radio operator used the single .50-caliber above the radio compartment. The waist guns, tail guns and ball turret were positions arbitrarily decided by the balance of the crew. The position that no one wanted was the ball turret, so I volunteered. Actually, when my heated suit operated properly, I felt fairly comfortable.

"Rise and shine" shouted through the flat of our tent at an hour and one half before sunrise, the day of our first combat mission. We were stationed in Tunis, North Africa at the time. Our target was a railroad yard north-east of Rome.



Fred at Moses Lake Air Base near Walla Walla, Washington, 1943.

We were then taken by truck to our designated aircraft. Each man had his specific preflight responsibilities while we waited for the flare: red aborted the mission, green meant "start your engines." This first mission was a green, and as soon as we were airborne I climbed down into my ball turret. Because of the very restricted space inside of the turret, we could not wear the conventional parachute like the rest of the crew. We wore a chest harness and left the chute outside of the turret nearby. Another sometimes frustrating feature of the ball was the difficulty in reaching all the plug inlets. We had to plug into the oxygen supply, heat for our "sometimes working" heated suits and the intercom system. It was also a long reach to cock the twin .50-caliber machine guns, which were fired by depressing the solenoid buttons on the handles that were used to control the movement of the turret. I could move the turret in any direction below the planes fuselage and fire simultaneously by depressing both buttons. The handles were located on each side of my head.

Our first bombing mission occurred on a beautiful, clear day and from my view, all seemed quiet on the ground. Moments after the bomb bay doors opened all hell broke loose. Some explosions were so close that I could feel the heat. The noise was incredible even with earphones on. We returned to base; shortly after landing trucks came to take us to interrogation. We were then given coffee, donuts and stiff shot of straight

whiskey. Most my age refused the whiskey. In retrospect this first mission was a milk run compared to many of the remaining 49 that I flew before returning to the good old U.S.A.

At a briefing prior to my 29th mission we were told that, with great reluctance, we were going to bomb Rome. The bombardiers were told accuracy was of supreme importance: Make several runs if necessary to prevent damage to the Eternal City of Rome. It was after our third run that day, 3 March 1944, after we had dropped our bombs that we were attacked. One of the ME 109s made a pass at our plane and as he passed low enough for me to shoot, I did and he lost altitude, smoking. In the process, one of his shells hit my turret and blew a large hole, sending shrapnel through my leg in several places. My wounds were not serious; I was beginning to walk quite well and wanted very much to get back to the tour of duty with my crew. In the meantime, I watched my friends getting formed to fly another mission through the hospital window.

I was released two weeks later, and it was customary for all personnel not flying to gather at the interrogation area and welcome the returning airmen. I quickly joined the crowd after returning from the hospital and was looking forward to welcoming my crew. When more than an hour passed after the last crew was brought in, I became concerned. No one at interrogation could or would give me information so I rushed to headquarters thinking that there might have been radio contact. There was none. I could not believe they had been shot down.

The next day in the orderly room, I found out that the crew lost two engines over Yugoslavia and could not maintain altitude ... the crew was told to bail out. I was told that the friendly underground had them safely in hand. I was given a 10-day leave to the aisle of Capri. When I returned, I was assigned to be our colonel's ball turret gunner in the lead plane until I finished my 50. By then, I was a victim of combat fatigue, a nervous wreck. I left with mixed emotions, not knowing if I had a serious nerve problem. Self-concern left me aboard the hospital ship bound for New York. Most of the GIs aboard were casualties of the Anzio Beach Head. I was still in one piece, though our local newspaper had reported that I had been killed in action.

Kenneth Matthews

Naval Storekeeper during Vietnam

There's a tradition of Naval service in the Matthews family. Ken's father, Harold (Back from Duty:1 page 16), served as a Machinist's Mate in World War II, Ken's brother, David, served as an Engine Man, Ken served as a Storekeeper and now the third generation of the family is serving. Ken's son, Kenneth, is currently a Gunner's Mate and his nephew, Arron is a Electronic Technician in the Navy.

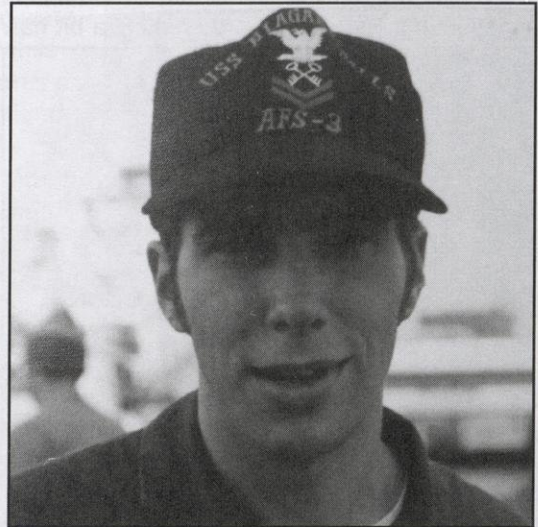
I enlisted in 1971 through the CACHE program, which allowed me to delay entry up to 60 days, so I went in on January 7, 1972, to a brand-new training facility in Orlando. I had graduated from Michigan Tech and was 1-A, and though it was not legal to discriminate against someone because of their draft status, I was having a difficult time finding a job.

I enlisted because I knew if I didn't, I was next on the list to go in January. My dad and brother had both been in the Navy, and a dear friend of mine who had been in country in Vietnam made it very clear that that was not where I wanted to go.

So, without knowing what I was picking and going in as a normal seaman recruit, I enlisted. I wanted to work in engines, in a mechanical area, but because of my degree, my recruiter put me in operations, which included office work. I did end up going into supply because of my degree and because I was colorblind.

I ended up being in charge of my squad during basic training. It was a pretty eye-opening experience. There were guys in my squad who had never worn shoes or never been to a dentist. There was a real cross section of guys there. After initial training - which also afforded me the opportunity to visit another brand-new facility nearby: Disney World - I had eight more weeks of school in San Diego and then a few more weeks of advanced training in shipping.

My first assignment was on the USS Mars AFS-1. When I went



Ken aboard the USS Niagara Falls.



Both the Mars and the Niagara Falls would transport stores ship to ship by helicopter.

to A School, I had learned the manual replenishment system, and the Mars was an automated supply ship. We used a Univac 2000 with punch cards and big tape drives. We were a combat stores ship and carried a variety of spare parts, supplies (toilet paper, mops and rags) and food, including refrigerated, frozen and canned. We'd load up and go online off the coast of Vietnam for two to four weeks to replenish ships that were underway. Most of the time we transferred the supplies via helicopter from ship to ship, but sometimes we'd run a line between us and the ship we were replenishing.

I spent four months on the Mars, and when it was sent back to the States, I was assigned to the USS Niagara Falls AFS-3, which took the Mars' place. Unlike my job on the Mars, which was in the office (I had a master sergeant who looked out for me), I started this job as a part of the cargo handling crew in Hold No. 2. I was primarily in charge of mops, toilet paper, paint and other consumables. Initially I wasn't too pleased about this, but I came to enjoy it. After awhile, I did go back to being an office guy and eventually became the enlisted person who ran the office.

That was the beauty of the military - there I was, a 23-year-old kid, running a store that carries millions of dollars worth of products. I learned a lot of people skills, too. I remember there was a lieutenant who was working with me when I moved into a supervisory role. I had a younger group of guys working under me and, of course, I wanted them to do things the way I did them. My lieutenant told me that I had really good people working for me and that I should monitor what they did and trust them to do their jobs. It was a great piece of advice.

I saw quite a few countries: The Philippines, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. I liked to get away from the military aspect of what I was doing, to get off the beaten path where the people were genuine. It was hard sometimes because the U.S. military didn't get a lot of respect. We weren't allowed to leave the ship with in uniform, which was hard, particularly when we were in the States.

Blaming soldiers who were in Vietnam left a lot of us with a very bitter pill to swallow and some of us have never gotten past it. A lot of us worked really hard and didn't get a proper welcome home. I've been doing a lot of work with the Paralyzed Veterans of America [Ken was paralyzed in a car accident two years ago] to ensure that today's veterans are welcomed home and get the support and care they deserve.

William J. Matthies

As interviewed by John Dudley
and remembered by his son, Michael Matthies

Field Artillery during World War II

To join the army would have broken my grandmother's heart, so my dad secretly contacted the Wauwatosa draft board and asked to be sent out with the next group of draftees. His reasons for wanting to go were probably as much patriotic as they were just wanting an excuse to get away from home and be a part of the youthful excitement of the war.

On April 5, 1943, my dad went by train to Fort Sheridan and was assigned to Fort Hood, Texas for 13 weeks of basic training. He measured in at 6 ft 4.5 inches and would return home an inch and a half taller. He remembered training as sort of a gym class that he actually enjoyed.

A hike with a heavy pack may have been followed by training films and then perhaps a mock battle engagement. He remembered feeling a bit naïve; the training films introduced him to something called “venereal diseases.” During this time he also received training on all sorts of military equipment. He was trained in what he called “dirty fighting.”



His next stop was Fort Jackson, S.C., where the 739, 740, and 741st field Artillery Battalions were being formed. When asked what his favorite subject in school was, he responded math. He was put on the 739th's survey team. Using charts and a slide rule, my dad learned to calculate the information needed to accurately aim, based on the locations of the cannon, the target, wind speed and air density. My dad typically provided fire direction for three cannons at a time, taking 1.5 min. for each calculation. Exact calculations were necessary since the cannons were often shooting over and very near the American troops on the front lines.

Before his deployment overseas, my dad also participated in mock battles at Smokey Mountain, Tenn. When D-Day actually occurred, he and his battalion were in New York awaiting their June 19 deployment. The three battalions, along with other infantry battalions, were steaming towards England on the Queen Elizabeth. Three weeks after D-day he arrived on Omaha beach where battle remains were everywhere. He was now in the war.

Bill not only got the job done on the field, but also as an entertainer in the USO halls.

His combat introduction was at the St. Malo harbor where the Germans still held the Isle De Cezembre with their fixed cannons aimed out to sea. They controlled the harbor. The 739th came up

from behind. My dad set up fire control in the top of a hotel overlooking the harbor at Dinard for the five-day siege. Nine hundred and nineteen rounds were fired (115 tons) into the fortress before the Germans gave up. The grateful French served my dad sandwiches and lemonade.

On September 4, 1944, his battalion began its long march across France to join the 3rd army near Sens. The area had recently been liberated and French civilians cheered them on in every town. Pushing on in various engagements they moved through Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland and finally in to Germany itself. My dad spent the winter of 1944 living mostly in a pup tent. He received the Bronze Star during the Battle of the Bulge for providing accurate fire support for 2.5 days without sleep.

Just a short distance from Berlin the order came to stop firing the howitzers for fear of hitting the Russians. Three days later, on May 9, 1945, Germany surrendered. My dad had traveled 1,500 miles from the beach of France and spent more than 250 days in combat.

The rest of his time in service was on a different sort of mission as the troops created order in Germany. There was no more need for cannons. When making assignments, they asked my dad, “What do you do?” He replied, “I play piano.” He was assigned to a USO near Frankfurt, where he played the meanest boogie-woogie in addition to other popular songs. He entertained the troops by night and played ping pong by day until he got enough points to come home. In December he came home on the Queen Mary.

After he returned, my dad made his home in Grafton. Under the name of the Bil-Bet Co. he tuned and repaired pianos in the churches, schools and homes in the area. He would always leave a tuning job by playing a little concert, often ending with an old World War II-era song. The story Dad told most often when asked about the war was about sharing his food with Willie Kanous, a 10-year-old boy he befriended while in Germany.

Harold "Dinger" Medinger

Forward Observer, Section Chief in Korea

I, Harold Medinger, worked at Wisconsin Electric in Port Washington when I decided to enlist in the U. S. Army with four buddies: Mel Hubing, Ray Rassel, Lyall "Fleck" Flerchinger and Richard Bley. We all were from the Belgium area, and enlisted for two years: September 1951 to September 1953.

I was sent to Fort Sill for Field Artillery training. I spent 16 weeks at Fort Sill and a few at Camp Chaffee. After a week of leave, I went to Japan for eight weeks of Special Training at Eta Jima, the Naval Academy of Japan.

There I did a lot of traveling on weekends and during my free time. I saw Hiroshima and Nagasaki where the atomic bomb had been dropped in 1945. The damage was unbelievable. Much of the area had been fenced off as a memorial site. We saw the after-effects suffered by women who were either pregnant at the time of the bombing or had gotten pregnant while the radiation was still in the air. Their babies were born with three arms or three legs, extra parts attached to their bodies. The mothers and children could all be seen begging for money.

When my time in Japan was up, I flew to Korea and hooked up with the 57th Field Artillery, 7th Division. There I started off as a Jeep driver and Radio Operator for a Forward Observer unit. That was in April 1952 while we were attached to the Colombian Battalion. My officer was Spanish (Mexican) and the other two guys were from Puerto Rico. All spoke fluent English. I, however, was the only person in the Battalion that did not speak Spanish. The Colombians serve rice and lots of carbohydrates with every meal, so I gained 20 pounds in the first nine months.

We did a lot of directing artillery fire on the North Koreans and Chinese to the front of us. We had a tank with a 155mm gun mounted on it that sat right next to our bunker. We used it at our discretion. Our job was to close the openings on the mountainsides where their troops took cover and hid their tanks and other weapons. We could also call in air strikes and other artillery fire when we were attacked from our position.



The bunker in reserve, Korea.

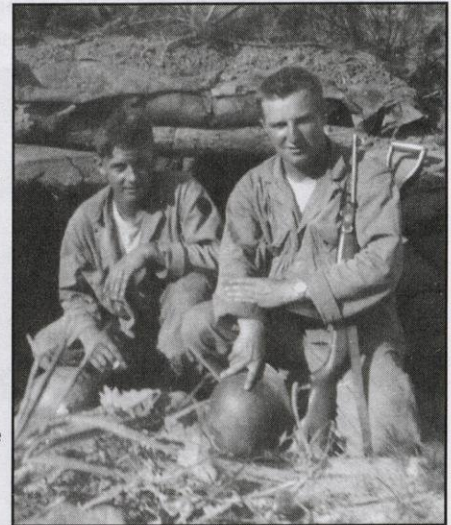
On June 21, 1952, we were in action near Mando, North Korea. During an assault on Hill 400, we were given the job of keeping wire communications intact. I had to move into the impact area of heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire to repair several communications to permit the continuance of friendly artillery fire on the enemy. That went on for about four hours; more than 200 rounds of mortar and artillery rounds came in. For that effort, I was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Letter "V" Device. At that time, I was a Private First Class; soon after I became a Sergeant.

The war slowed down after July. There still was a lot of action, but no major action in our area. I had spent all nine months on the front line. I went to see my buddy, Mel Wester (from the Belgium area), who was in the 31st Division and also on the front line. It was a good visit. I gave him some film to take home to give to my mom for developing. He was going home the next day as he already had his 36 points. I'm sorry to say that my friend was killed that same night by enemy fire that I had heard. I did not know for several weeks, until I received letters from home, that Mel had died. I have pictures of the two of us together on that day.

I left Korea around the end of January 1953 when I had my 36 points. Before I entered the service, I had been engaged to Katie Keller. On my 30-day leave, we decided to marry on Feb. 14, 1953. I took my blood test aboard ship and arrived home on February 10. The wedding went off without a hitch.

My orders were to report to Camp Carson, Col., on March 5, 1953. We lived there for two months, then transferred to Camp Atterbury, Ind. until I was discharged in September 1953.

I am a Life Member of Legion Post 412 Belgium and VFW Post 5373 in Belgium, even though we now live in Woodruff. I'm also active in Post 89 in Minocqua. We have six children, 13 grandchildren, and live on Bolton Lake in Lac du Flambeau. We enjoy the company of everyone.



Mel "Mif" Wester (left) and Dinger. Mif was killed that night by enemy fire.

Herb Mentzel

Cryptographer during the Korean War

Those who remember Herb Mentzel for his service at the Grafton Post Office will hardly be surprised when they find out that he also delivered communication of a different kind while serving with the Army Signal Corps from 1953 to 1955.

I had graduated from Grafton High School and was working, but I was really just biding my time. I knew the draft was going to get me in a year or two. Exactly two years after I graduated from high school, I was drafted. That was okay, though, because I wanted to get my service time out of the way before I had a good job.

The Army had me report to Camp Gordon, Ga., for Signal School, and I took a test to become a cryptographer. We all had to take a lie detector test because that was right around the time they found two spies at Ft. Monmouth, N.J., the other training base for the Signal Corps. I was pretty happy with my assignment in the Signal



Corps because I thought it was much better than carrying a rifle and I liked mechanical things. I also thought that it would improve my chances of being in a communication center as opposed to on the front lines.

As I went through training, I also found that I really enjoyed the work to a certain degree. It was challenging and it put me in a good position for a lifetime career, if that was something that interested me, I would've become a civilian employee for the military. I later found out that I wouldn't have a choice of station, so I never really pursued this particular career.

We were trained to take the American language and mechanically encrypt it so no one could understand it. We worked on machines that looked like a typewriters. We had a key that we used which decided how the message would be encoded or decoded, depending on whether it was an outgoing or incoming message.

After training, I was given a 14-day leave to come home to Grafton. I was supposed to report to Tokyo, but when I was onboard the Merchant Marine boat, I found out my MOS was full. I was sent to Yokohama and took an electric train - which was the fastest thing I've ever been in - to Sasabo. We had a good inkling of where we were being sent, even though I hoped it wasn't true. Sasabo was the reinduction center for Korea. Based on what we were issued, we knew what the score was.

Grafton's Herb Mentzel served in Seoul during the Korean War.

We were taken to Pusan, and half of the city was on fire. The conflict was really coming to a climax at the point I was there - the

Chinese had pushed down three times and we were trying to keep them at the 38th Parallel. I thought Korea was the hellhole of the world - not only was it all bombed and burned, but the people lived and acted differently. The sanitary conditions were very poor; they urinated in the streets and they would let their meat and fish sit out. It would be covered with flies for a few days before they ate it.

I was shipped up to Seoul and stationed at the 304 Message Center. We worked in quonset huts behind a converted Korean building. We worked on a variety of messages, from top secret information to basic stuff. We worked basic eight-hour shifts and every two weeks we would rotate shifts. We lived in a tent city nearby.

A friend of mine was an officer and he liked to hunt. We got permission to hunt pheasants, and boy, was there some good pheasant hunting in Korea. I also learned how pheasants operated. They would actually have a sentry who would warn the rest of the flock of danger. If we ran into one, we'd leave it alone and keep right on going to the flock. After we went hunting, my friend got us into the Officer's Mess kitchen, where we were able to prepare the pheasant. It was around Thanksgiving and I sure learned how well the officers ate!

I had no intention of staying in the Army - I wanted to come home and start a life with my fiance, Ruth. When it was time to come home, I remember we left through Inchon. There was a Russian soldier standing completely motionless and he was counting every individual American soldier as he left. We had to take an LST out to the mother ship because when the tide goes out, Inchon Bay becomes very shallow. They took all our clothes away, gave us shots, pills and brand-new work and dress uniforms. We knew we were on our way home.

Roger Miller

Army Cook

When Roger Miller graduated from high school in 1952, he immediately enlisted, though he deferred his enlistment until October so he could help with field work on his father and uncle's farm before leaving. He viewed his enlistment as a ticket away from home.

I was open to the opportunity of going in the Army. I enlisted because I saw all the young guys around getting drafted. I saw it as a fantastic learning experience, and since then, I've viewed it as my "college."

After my induction at Ft. Sheridan, Ill., I was sent to Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., and I was pretty gung-ho. I also had a pretty unique experience - I never pulled guard duty during basic training. In fact, the one time I was scheduled to do it, I developed a really bad cold. It was about six weeks into our eight weeks of training. I crawled in bed and someone else took my guard duty. Another friend went to the mess hall and brought back some chicken soup. I recovered nicely.

After basic training, I was assigned to be a cook and went on to cooks' school. I did the cooking at home after my mother died, and I was used to cooking for my dad, uncle and myself. In the military, we learned how to cook on a grand scale. We also learned about meal prep and sanitation.

After cook training, I was stationed at Ft. Bragg, N.C. It was at that time I also got married. You had to be 21 to get married in Wisconsin, but you could get married at 18 with your parents' permission. My dad originally gave me permission, but then other family members put pressure on him so he reversed his decision. Sylvia and I decided that we would simply get married in North Carolina, where the age of consent was 18. She was a year younger than me, and she graduated high school on a Tuesday, got on an airplane at 6 a.m. the next morning and we were going to get married that Saturday.

Sylvia had a wedding dress and we took a taxi out to the chapel at Ft. Bragg, but there was no chaplain! I was telephoning around to find the chaplain with the taxi meter still running. Finally, the taxi driver said, "Hey I know a Rev. Lynch back in Fayetteville, he'll marry you." So we went back to town, he took us to Rev. Lynch, Mrs. Lynch came out of the kitchen in her apron and played "Here Comes the Bride" and Sylvia and I were married.

We'd been married eight weeks when a kitchen stove blew up on me. We used coal-fired stoves and the particular coal bucket I had been using had four inches of lamb grease in it. I spent three weeks in the hospital and I had 34 morphine shots in 17 days. Sylvia would take the bus out to the hospital at Ft. Bragg to sit with me. The first time she came out, the doctor cornered her and wanted to know about my "lifestyle" because the morphine had very little effect on me. He didn't realize that I was a tough Wisconsin farm boy.

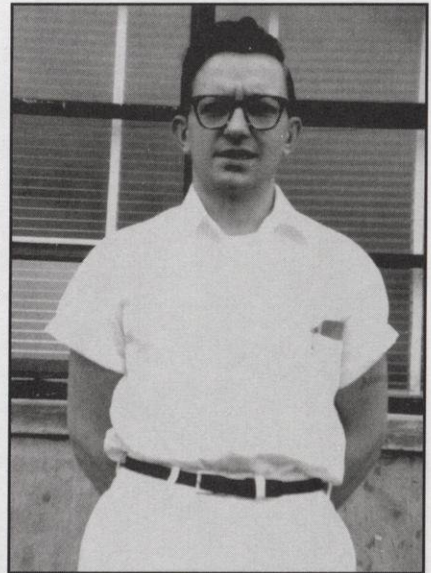
After I recuperated, I went back to work. We had a choice of two shifts: noon to noon or a full day (breakfast, lunch and dinner) with the next day off. I chose the full day schedule. We also had to work every other Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The menu was decided for us and we'd procure at base food warehouse what we needed. There was some room for modifications, such as if certain items weren't available. We used to put some out-of-the-world spreads out for the holidays - turkey, canned nuts, cakes, cranberry sauce - and the enlisted men could bring their wives on the holidays. It wasn't hard to cook, we just did it in vast quantities at a time.

Late in spring 1954 my company was going on maneuvers. We packed Sylvia up and sent her back to Wisconsin. While on maneuvers I was selected to go to Mess Steward's school with men returning from Korea. In a class of 11 I was the top student and received a watch. Upon completion of this school, I was reassigned to Ft. Dix, N.J. I picked up Sylvia in Wisconsin and we moved to Trenton, N.J., though after four months, I received a one-year overseas assignment to Kevlavik, Iceland. Sylvia went back to Wisconsin.

Kevlavik was a major American military base. The Navy also flew 12 hour patrols from there and the Army had listening stages at the north end of the island. I thought Iceland would be cold, icy and snowy - I was wrong. The coldest temperature when I was there was 30 degrees and there was no snow and little ice. The terrain was barren, almost like volcanic rock.

The people weren't that friendly toward us, though the girls were pretty. Military life in Iceland probably wasn't that much different than at any other base, though there were times when we didn't have fresh food or produce. I didn't travel much, though I once did go to Reykjavik to get an eye exam.

I enjoyed the military and I seriously considered re-enlisting. But when I was in Iceland, I became very depressed ... I don't know if it was because I missed Sylvia, but the only thing I could think of was settling down. After nine months in Iceland I surprised Sylvia and flew home on the night of her grandparents' golden anniversary. Two weeks of leave and I returned to Iceland for the three remaining months of duty.



Roger in his kitchen whites, May 1955.

Douglas Morrison

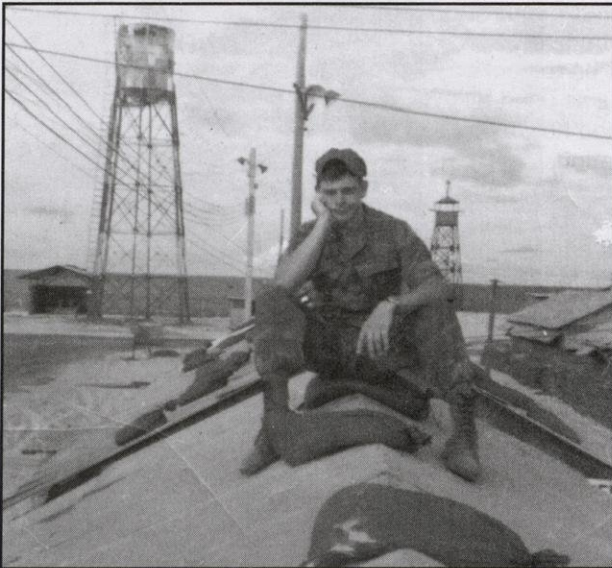
Interviewed by his classmate, Gary Johanski,
Grafton High School Class of 1969

Served in administration and medvac in Vietnam

Enlisting in the Marine Corps within a month after graduating from Grafton High School in 1969, Doug Morrison spent three years on active duty. He was stationed overseas for most of his enlistment, including an extended rotation in Vietnam.

I knew before I graduated from high school that I wanted to join the Marine Corps. I graduated in May 1969, and I was in Marine Corps boot camp in June. Basic and additional training took six months. My first duty assignment was Vietnam.

I arrived in Vietnam in January 1970. I was assigned to Headquarters, III MAF (Marine Amphibious Force), the central command post for Marines in the northern I Corps region. My job was a clerk in the G-3 section, where I worked with classified documents pertaining to troop deployments.



Doug Morrison at China Beach, Vietnam, 1970.

I was reassigned to Headquarters, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in March 1970, near the DaNang Air Base. My job was to handle everything administrative in a squadron office. We all had to rotate on guard duty and go on patrols in the surrounding areas, as well as supporting the infantry. In the field, I carried an M-79 grenade launcher and a .45 caliber pistol.

In addition to field operations, enemy rockets would frequently be fired at the DaNang Air Base, many times hitting in our area, almost exclusively at night. I got pretty good at getting my helmet and flak jacket on and getting into bunkers. The DaNang Air Base, a major air facility for jet bombers and commercial aircraft always had activity. There was also a large evacuation hospital next to us, so choppers were constantly landing and taking off. The morgue was at the north end of the runway. An obscure building, the smell of embalming fluid was always present. I

was fortunate to be with a great group of fellow Marines. I turned 19 years old during my first year in Vietnam. I went on R&R to Bangkok, Thailand, and I saw, from way back on a hill, the Bob Hope Holiday Show.

At the end of 1970, when I was to rotate out of Vietnam, I received orders to report to North Carolina as my next assignment. I had a year and a half left on my enlistment. A few of us who were rotating out about the same time decided to extend our tours in Vietnam by six months. I went home for 30-days of leave in January 1971, and returned to my unit in Vietnam in February.

In April, I was sent to the Marble Mountain Air Facility just north of DaNang. Marble Mountain was the main Marine Corps facility for helicopter squadrons. I was assigned to the base squadron, continuing to work in administration. I was immediately put on "skins" which meant I was on-call for flight crew duty. I had to go on a couple of practice runs at a firing range to learn how to fire a .50 caliber machine gun so I would be qualified to be a door gunner. I flew a few troop insertions and medevacs. I vividly remember all the blood and noise, especially one day. We had just returned from our second medevac run and after leaving the chopper, I turned around to see them hosing down the interior. It was red from all the blood.

I left Vietnam at the end of May 1971, assigned to a Huey helicopter squadron on Okinawa. I had just turned 20 years old and had been promoted to the rank of sergeant. My overseas extension time ran out in August, and I received orders again for the East Coast. Upon reporting to the new base, I was offered an assignment in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The tour was for a minimum of six months; I took it.

I reported for duty in Cuba in October 1971 and stayed until March of 1972. I was the administrative chief of a very large company office. I was again lucky enough to see Bob Hope, this time much closer. I finished my military commitment in June 1972 at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina. Out of the three years in the Marine Corps, I was officially stationed in the United States for 52 days. All my other assignments, after training, were overseas.

Returning to civilian life was a challenge. I went to college using my G.I. Bill benefits and earned both a bachelor and masters degree. I have seen only two men I served with in Vietnam.

Wayne Mutza

Crew Chief in the 240th Assault Helicopter Co.

I enlisted in the Army in 1969 intent on a Special Forces career. While serving as an airborne infantryman, a shortage of helicopter crewmen led to my assignment as an assault helicopter company crew chief. Hearing the popular 1960s song, "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother," takes me back to a time when I was young and full of fire.

Glowing tracer bullets arcing upward toward our Huey looked like flaming basketballs. Some found their mark with a sickening, familiar thud as enemy gunners probed the black sky during our approach. They knew we were coming, they were ready and they were mad. Once again, I didn't believe I would live to see daybreak. We were a single helicopter inbound to find a SEAL team that had found trouble in South Vietnam's Rung Sat Special Zone. Their radio calls told us they had stirred up a hornet's nest, and now they needed to be pulled out, immediately.

Vietnam's Rung Sat (translation: "Forest of Assassins") is a 400-square mile expanse of fetid muck and dense mangrove swamps. The forbidding terrain was a natural hideout for the Viet Cong. It fell upon small teams of SEALs to deny them use of the region.

Among the wide variety of missions flown by my unit, those supporting SEALs in the Rung Sat guaranteed high drama. To provide them every chance of survival, the same helicopter crew that inserted them pulled them out. The odds were against us, but my unit had spirit, boldness and a can-do, yet devil-may-care, attitude.

We had inserted a SEAL team during daylight and waited at a distant SEAL base. A few games of volleyball, test firing our weapons and restless sleep helped pass the time while "our" team penetrated the dark, primeval Rung Sat. A few hours after dark, the radio crackled to life with an urgent, yet calm message from the team leader. They were on the run and needed immediate extraction. Before the radio became silent, we were already scrambling aboard our Huey. As the aircraft began trembling the beating rotors, we donned helmets, plugged in communication cords and strapped on body armor. My gunner and I locked belts of ammunition into our machine guns.

While flying low level at top speed in the blackness, the pilot and SEAL team maintained radio contact. Our goal: snatch them before the large enemy force caught up with them.

Arcing tracers told us we were close. Despite radio contact, the team was difficult to find in the darkness, and to them our blacked out helicopter was invisible. Hearing us nearby, the team had slowed, allowing the enemy to close the distance. Slowly flying over the swamps, with bullets slamming into our aircraft, in desperation the pilot turned on our powerful searchlight, and there 50 feet below us, was the team. The enemy was close behind so we fired over the SEALs' heads as we dropped into the tall grass.



Crew chiefs and door gunners of the 240th Assault Helicopter Co., Vietnam, 1971. Not all survived the war. Mutza is fourth from right.

Our skids barely touched the ground as the SEALs dove into the helicopter, my machine gun hosing the muzzle flashes in the high grass. As the SEALs clambered aboard they too fired into the darkness. Seconds were an agonizing eternity among the ear-splitting gunfire as we tried to count the commandos. When I felt the chopper lurch upward, I thought we had them all and that we might actually pull this off.

But ...I spotted a man running toward us in the grass flattened by our rotors - a man too large to be the enemy, and wearing SEAL camouflage. I saw him crumple as he was shot in the leg. Instinctively I jumped out, which disconnected my helmet radio cord, and got to him. The chopper started to lift, but my gunner, who, thankfully, saw me leap out, yelled to the pilot, "No!" Carrying the wounded SEAL, I tumbled into the chopper as strong hands pulled us in. With guns ablaze, we lifted into the night. Despite the gagging stench of blood, gunsmoke, the wet SEALs and the stale swamp air, life smelled sweet. We had survived another day in Vietnam.

A few days later, after a day of flying, I was told a large Navy man had limped into our compound to see me. Funny, I didn't remember him being heavy at all. We never did meet, but I'm proud to have had a part in the SEALs' claim to never having left anyone behind in Vietnam.



Wayne Mutza (left) and his friend Luis Quintero, Ft. Bragg, 1970. Quintero died in a helicopter crash shortly thereafter.

Served Two Tours in Vietnam

Milwaukee native Michael Norman had family members who were serving in the military, a fact that he believes affected his decision to join the military.

I was one of those children who knew it all. I quit high school during my junior year. I knew I wanted to go into the Marines. Me, being the smart alleck that I was, I was going to go with the best. They're the President's 911 - when he needs help, they're the first ones there.

One day I skipped school and went down to the Marine recruiter. I passed the aptitude test, but my parents had to sign for me because I was 17. I was in for a rude awakening when I arrived in San Diego. I had said, "Give me the sunglasses and surfboard..."



Mike served with the USMC from October 1965 until September 1969.

We had eight weeks of training since Vietnam War was going on. I grew up real fast in those eight weeks. When I came home on leave, I sat down with my parents and apologized to them. I said, "You know more than I did." They really appreciated that.

I went back to Camp Pendleton for more training. My MOS was a 32-11, Redistribution and Disposal. Depending on where you were stationed, that could vary. It could be weapons from World War II. It could be "bag 'em and tag 'em." That's what I did for a little bit in Vietnam.

Mothers are funny that way. They want all the arms, the fingers, the legs. They had to match. You couldn't have two left arms in a bag. You had to get all the parts to that person into that bag.

We'd be out in the field getting them and doing the best we could. We'd pick them up, put them in body bags and put them on a truck. They'd head for a mortuary in Da Nang. There they'd clean up the bodies, put them in metal coffins and ship them back to the States.

But I spent a year in California before that, including my basic. You couldn't go overseas until you were at least 18. The first orders I received were for Hawaii, and I spent a year there as well. I was stationed at Kane'ohe Bay, Hawaii but billeted at Pearl Harbor. It was amazing - every day going to work we'd pass the USS Arizona and some of the buildings still had bullet holes.

I was in redistribution and disposal there, too, but I worked in a warehouse. It was a lot of paperwork. That's where I learned how to become a scrounge. Hawaii was fun duty; it was like being on vacation.

With my next orders, I knew I was going to Vietnam. I first went home on a 20-day leave and then reported to Camp Pendleton for a little more training before going overseas. This training was different - we got very little sleep. It was more extensive training than in the past. We were taught how to survive if we were captured and if we escaped. We learned how to navigate without a compass and which animals and vegetation were edible.

We flew to Da Nang on a commercial flight. When we touched down and the doors opened up, it was "hot city." That's when it starts hitting you. That's when you really start thinking. I told myself, "I'm coming back intact, not tacked in." Anybody who wasn't scared at that point wasn't in their right mind or were lying.

During my first six months in Vietnam, I did quite a few things. I did some bag-'em-and-tag-'em; I did enemy body counts and I drove in convoys up north. After that, I was put in the "Mod Squad" and we did patrols. All the people let their hair grow, they had mustaches, and the uniforms they wore weren't exactly proper. I even had a pair of custom-made bell-bottom fatigues

When it came time for my rotation back to the States, I went in and said I wanted to extend for another year. I liked Vietnam. If you put the war aside, it was a very pretty country. I liked the Orient and I loved the weather. But I knew there was a great risk.

I wanted to get into Civil Affairs, which was working with the Vietnamese. We wore red badges that said "Dan Suvu," which meant village helper. That was where you really got to experience the different cultures and help them out. One of the villages we worked with got hit by mortars and we rebuilt 14 huts for them. My scrounging abilities that I learned in Hawaii came in handy.

I could also speak Vietnamese - enough to get by - and it just came to me. I couldn't read it or write it, though. Because we helped out the villages, the village chiefs would let us know if the Viet Cong were in the area. We acquired quite a bit of stuff that way. We didn't turn it in though. We used it for trading and bartering. But we also had to take steps to keep the VC from retaliating against those villagers. We even went so far as to run a telephone line out to them and they would call us if something seemed to be happening.

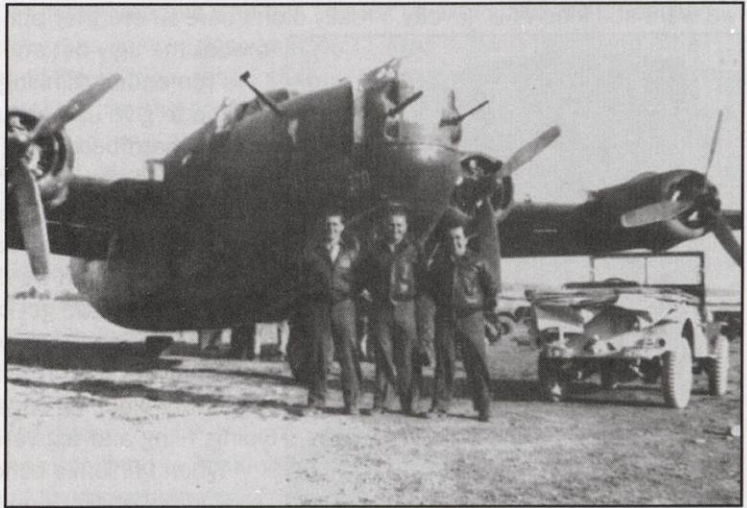
Pilot and Waist Gunner during World War II

I have always had a fascination with airplanes. As a youngster I would get in trouble for staring at passing airplanes when I was supposed to be working. In early 1941 I wanted to enlist in the Army Air Corps. My parents strongly objected and wouldn't sign for me. My father was an infantryman in WWI and was wounded twice and gassed. My mother grew up in France and survived WWI. Neither wanted their children to experience war.

After Pearl Harbor I was 21 and could enlist on my own. I soon learned I lacked the two-year college requirement for the cadet program. I joined the Army enlisted pilot program and trained in non-combat, recon, liaison, courier and transport flying.

I was almost through the multi-engine training in June 1942 when half of the class was sent to Florida. We thought we had flunked out, but found we were transferred into the Air Corps. We were trained to be warrant officer co-pilots on B-24 bombers as part of the Halverson Project (Halpro) that was to bomb Japan from bases in China. Half of the group had already left in May. After the Doolittle raid on Japan, the Japanese overran the bases needed and Halpro was diverted to the Middle East with orders to support the British in preventing Rommel from taking Cairo and the Suez Canal. By the time we joined them in late August we were now the First Provisional Bomb Group under British command.

We flew missions out of Palestine, Egypt and bases in the Libyan desert against supply lines of Rommel's Afrika Korps.



Alex Noster and two crew members from his B-24 Bomber during World War II.

In November 1942 there was another reorganization and we became the 376th Bomb Group. There was a change in command and a new directive ended the role of non-commissioned pilots. I chose to be a waist gunner and trained at an RAF facility. Waist gunners protect the vulnerable sides of the B-24. I think often of my emotions on the first enemy plane I helped down. I could see the pilot was dead as he slid below us. While elated over the victory, I also thought of his mother getting the news of his death and felt sorry for her.

Life in the desert was harsh. The frequent sand storms left us coughing for days. Our tents were magnets for scorpions escaping the night's cold. Swarms of flies and lack of sanitation brought much dysentery. Between scorpion stings and dysentery, the sick call lines often seemed longer than the chow lines.

A typical mission had us up at three in the morning. We would gather our personal belongings to be sent home in case we didn't come back. The missions were at high altitude where the temperature was twenty to thirty below zero. We wore woolen underwear, a heated suit, our uniform and a sheepskin flight suit and still got cold. Above ten thousand feet we used oxygen. The masks were very uncomfortable.

My flying ended when we crash landed on my 26th mission. We received hits in the left wing while over the harbor at Tunis. A hard landing collapsed the left main landing gear and caused the breakup of the plane and the deaths of two of the crew. I received a punctured lung and spent three months in a British Army Hospital in Cairo. I was released DNIF (Duty Not Involving Flying). Dryness of oxygen irritated the tender lung tissue. I was temporarily assigned as an armorer but continued in that role until the war's end.

During the war my parents moved to a small farm near Plymouth. Returning home I wanted to surprise them, but didn't know how to get there. I went to the police station and they offered to take me. I never thought about the impact a squad car would have, as often times this was the way bad news was delivered during the war. After I stepped from the car there was great relief and a great reunion.

Looking back it was a great adventure for a Wisconsin farm boy. I did several tours of the Holy Land, saw two of the Seven Wonders of the World, rode a camel, swam in the Nile and picked dates in a desert oasis. In Italy I visited Capri and Pompeii and climbed Mt. Vesuvius. I extensively toured the city of Rome. In the Vatican I was spellbound by the splendor of St. Peter's and while there happened to be part of a group of American soldiers received by the Pope.

After the war I got reinstated and continue to be an active pilot.

Alex Noster passed away on February 13, 2005.

Administrative Clerk in the Marines and National Guard

Judy O'Hara's father was a Navy veteran who survived the attack on Pearl Harbor. She says her father was always her hero, and she always wanted to grow up to be "just like him."

When I was 16, I started looking into the different military branches. I started with the Navy because of my dad and they didn't take me seriously: "Come back when you're 18, kid." So I looked into the Marine Corps and they took me with open arms. I had to wait until I was 18 to go in, but they did sign me up into the early program.

All enlisted women in the Marine Corps go to Parris Island. Our platoon - 40 or 50 - was full of women, though we were still kind of a novelty. I really didn't care where they put me; I just didn't want to be a cook. I didn't want



Judy served with the USMC from 1969 until 1971 and then with the Army National Guard from 1989 until 2001.

to wear the ugly hat and I didn't want to stand behind a grease pot.

I remember thinking during basic, "I hate myself for doing this!" But I refused to give up because that's not part of my nature. At the time, it seemed hard because it was a different way of life. But when I look at what women do now, I think they have it harder. They actually go out and do the field work; they drive the big trucks and shoot the weapons. We didn't even wear fatigues. We wore a uniform when we cleaned and when we marched, which we did a lot of. We did pushups on our knees.

After basic, we got our assignments. One girl went to Hawaii, another one went to San Francisco ... I went across the street to Admin School. I was no longer a recruit, I was a private. And my mattress got thicker! I remember sleeping so well in my new barracks. During the day, I learned typing, filing and regulations.

When I finished school, I was then sent to San Francisco Bay, where I served until about June 1970. I was an Admin Clerk for Headquarters and Casualty Company Marine Barracks Treasure Island. Anybody who was on their way to WESTPAC (Vietnam) that had been a casualty at some point had to go through us.

When I was in San Francisco, I did put in to go to Saigon. I wanted to go to Vietnam, but I was told I had to be 21. I don't know if that was really true or not. I also had a chance to go to Guam, but I passed that by.

Ultimately, I did go back to Parris Island with my first husband, though we ended up back in California when he was transferred to Camp Pendleton. I was



Judy is the first woman to ever raise the flag at Marine Barracks Treasure Island in San Francisco.

discharged shortly after that.

I joined the Army National Guard in 1989. All I had to do in terms of additional training was attend an Army administrative school. I went to school for six months in lieu of weekend drills, but I also was licensed as a driver on a number of different vehicles (5-ton, 2 1/2-ton and the HMMWV) and qualified with weapons.

On January 1, 1991, I volunteered and was sent over to the 10th Chemical Company in Kaiserslautern, Germany. I worked in supply and helped get gas masks and other supplies ready and shipped out for Desert Storm. They had two positions open over there, one administration and one supply. I got there after the other girl, so they put me in supply for the three months, which was fine. Because I was National Guard, I didn't have to do any guard duty at night. I did get to travel on weekends and I visited many of the European countries. I found out I came very, very close to being deployed to Saudi Arabia with the unit I was attached to in Germany. But I went home.

Six years later as an E-5, I left for Bosnia and we were considered "peace keepers." We were stationed between Croatia and Bosnia. Any time we crossed the Sava River, we had to carry 150 rounds on us. We had our weapon, plus those rounds, our body armor and Kevlar - it was a lot of weight to carry around. We also spent some time at a base in Hungary and my husband and I ultimately adopted our daughter from Hungary due in part because of my experiences. Her first words were, "Love America" and she's been in this country for five years now.

Thanks to the military, I had a lot of little adventures and got to see quite a few things in my life. I earned some awards too. I'm particularly proud of my NATO award I earned for being in Bosnia.

Edward A. Oehme

Interviewed by his daughter, Ruth E. Oehme

Cook during the Korean War

My dad was born Oct. 13, 1929 and grew up in Fredonia. He attended Random Lake High School and graduated in 1947. As he looks back, he recalls that my grandparents were always in favor of military service.

After high school graduation, most of my friends were drafted so I decided to enlist. My military training began at Fort Belvoir in Alexandria, Va., which is right outside Washington, D.C. I looked forward to serving in the Army. My training was in Combat Engineering; I looked forward to playing with explosives.

January 1951 through Easter 1954: My basic training schedule was full. The list of explosives that I learned to safely use included TNT, C2 - putty explosives as well as cord explosives used to wrap around trees and other structures. Everyone learned quickly that if you can take orders respectfully, you'll get along just fine. The wood barracks were nothing like the comforts of home. There was a six-week stretch where I wasn't able to have any contact with my family. I did look forward to receiving letters - my mother would send one and I'd reply with one and the exchange continued. I sang tenor in the chapel choir every Sunday at 9 a.m.

When the training was complete it was immediately off to Korea. It took 21 days to cross the Pacific on a troop carrier with 2,000 men. The waves were over 40 feet at times, fortunately when the carrier was about four days outside of Japan, the water became much calmer. We dropped off and picked up soldiers in Yokohama before heading to Korea. When we arrived in Inchon, Korea, the port was very shallow so we were taken in on landing crafts.

Upon arrival in Korea, I received orders that I was assigned to cooking duty and would not be working with explosives as originally planned. I can't really say that I was disappointed; it was more a matter of doing what you were told.

I was in the 27th Regiment, the "wolfhounds." During the first three months, I became Corporal Mess Steward and within a year I was made Captain. The front line was great experience. The previous Mess Steward had left an abundance of canned goods that were constantly being transported as we needed to move. He must not have known what to do with them. My goal was to make use of them and

that is exactly what we did. The canned fruit became a real treasure when a baker from Mt. Hood, Ore. joined our Regiment. It didn't take him long to turn the canned fruit into demanded pies, kuchen and other fresh baked goodies. Officers from other companies would routinely travel the distance to stop over for the tasty bakery. It must have crossed the colonel's mind that he didn't want to see the bakery come to an end. I still remember clearly, the day that he came in and asked me if there was anything that I needed to keep the good food coming. At that time I had coincidentally been waiting for parts to be able to use the whole stove - we were down to two burners on one stove. It wasn't long before the colonel made arrangements for four additional stoves with four burners each, and that made the cooking much easier and efficient.

Two dozen men from our regiment were fighting from the Outpost which was located three miles ahead of the front line. With the extra stoves, I was able to make sure that those men ate warm meals at the Outpost. I was recognized with a Bronze Star for making the effort to get meals to the men serving there, because it was considered going above the call of duty.

When I took my next assignment, I was able to recommend my talented baker for a promotion. He had done such a fantastic job, and he did get the promotion. My next assignments were Fort Knox and Fort Campbell, Ky., then Camp Polk, La., and off to a tank outfit in Frankfurt, Germany on Jan. 10, 1953.

The schedule in Germany was one day on and three days off for six months. In the free time I would travel Europe. The time passed fast. I shopped for a new car because Non-Commissioned-Officers were able to have one vehicle transported home with them at no charge. It was a toss up between a 1953 Porsche for \$2,100.00 and a 1953 MG for \$1,800.00. The bright red MG just seemed to fit, so I made the purchase and enjoyed coming home with my new car. The only trouble with the car is that I do not still own it today.



(above) Ed worked as a cook for the "Wolfhounds."
(left) Ed's shiny, red 1953 MIG, bought for a mere \$1,800.



Carl Oeldemann

Hospital Corpsman

When Carl Oeldemann first imagined serving our country while in high school, he thought he could possibly combine duty and an established hobby and become a photographer's mate. That wasn't to happen, though Carl still has wonderful personal photos from his tour of duty as a Naval hospital corpsman.

I had dropped out of high school and enlisted in the Navy at 17. At that time, you had to have your parents' signature to join the military, and my dad agreed to sign me up. He knew I would do well in the Navy. In fact, he held a dance in our garage and he even supplied the beer.

Before I enlisted I used to photograph weddings, and I looked into being a photographer's mate. But the only photography the Navy needed was aerial photography, and that didn't excite me at all. Instead, I became a hospital corpsman because I thought it will help me get a good job when I was discharged.



Carl Oeldemann trained as a hospital corpsman in 1952.

Like many guys from our area, I did my initial training at Great Lakes. I also received training as a hospital corpsman and at EKG school. It was nice to be so close to Milwaukee and I really could get home whenever I wanted when I had liberty.

After I finished my training, I was sent to the hospital ship aboard the USS Consolation AH-15 out of Long Beach, California. It wasn't a bad assignment because there was the potential to be sent to Korea, which was starting to heat up. Unfortunately, once I arrived, they didn't need more than one EKG guy, and I volunteered to become the EEG guy.

We did get to a lot of ports: Honolulu, Subic Bay, Tourane Bay in French Indochina [now Vietnam], Hong Kong and Sasebo. Subic Bay was the wettest, dirtiest place I'd ever been in. We'd go into port in our Whites and they'd get quite dirty. Tourane Bay was also a filthy city. They had open pits full of urine. If we went into a bar, the table would still have the glass rings from the previous customers. The kids would also come up to us and we'd have little handprints all over our Whites.

Hong Kong was not a bad place. There was a lot of culture in the Far East, and I was able to get a feel for that in Hong Kong. I also went to Sasebo, which I thought was the cesspool of the Far East.

When we were in Sasebo, we took over operations for an old Army hospital, where we served soldiers, sailors, marines

and their dependents.

We didn't really have accommodations, so for awhile I actually bunked in the hospital. It was interesting because I was able to work in so many different departments, including the emergency room. I also drove an ambulance. One of the jobs that I held was a bit unusual: I shuttled Section 8s from Itazuke AFB to Tokyo International Airport.

While I was stationed there, I also ran into a priest that had been at our parish back in Milwaukee. I had the opportunity to see Nagasaki. I developed a nice appreciation for Japan; I enjoyed going to the coffeeshops and watching the Japanese people.

After my tour of duty was up, I returned to the States and was discharged at San Francisco. I took the train back home to Milwaukee and I remember my mother wouldn't allow me to bring my duffel bag in the house. I had to dump everything out outside.

When I became a civilian, I did go work for a medical company. I helped take care of the graphic recorders used for Alan Shepard on his first space walk, which was pretty neat. However, I ultimately became a police officer for the Franklin Police Department, received an Associate's degree in Criminal Justice from MATC and retired from the department after 22 1/2 years of service.

I've been involved in the American Legion for many years and I now serve as the 2nd District Chaplain and I serve as the chaplain for the Howard J. Schroeder Post in Mequon. I guess if I had to really sum it all up, I really do what I do "For God and Country."

Henry C. and Alfred C. Oeldemann

World War II Veterans

It would be difficult not to include the stories of Henry and Alfred Oeldemann, as these two big brothers had a clear influence on their brother, Carl. Here are their stories, as recalled in tribute by their younger brother.

I was five years old when my brother Alfred enlisted in the Navy. Before he enlisted, he worked at a CCC Camp in northern Wisconsin and jobs were hard to get, and that really factored into his decision to enlist in the Navy.

I didn't really have much idea of where he went or what he was doing at that time. He started out as a Machinist's Mate, which he really enjoyed doing. He was assigned to the destroyer Roper DD601. He was in the Atlantic fighting off the Nazis and their U-boats. He was at Tokyo for the signing of the treaty and served on the Missouri.

He then ended up managing the NCO club in Port O'Spain, Trinidad for a short while before serving in the Pacific. He really liked Trinidad, though he only managed the club for about three months.

He did get to see quite a bit of the world, including the Panama Canal. I remember him describing it as "awesome."

Alfred made chief petty officer in three years, 10 months, which was quite impressive. Nobody did it that fast. He (and we) were very proud of that fact.

I remember Alfred brought home a Japanese rifle. I was about 11 years old at the time and while I could take it apart, he couldn't get it back together.

He was offered a pin stripe to become a warrant officer, but he declined and was discharged. When he came home, he worked as a conductor on the Northshore line. He died in 1996.

My other brother, Henry, also worked on the Northshore line. Before he was drafted, he had qualified as an Able Bodied Seaman, so it was pretty clear that he would somehow end up on the sea. He had heard about some of the problems that the guys who were drafted early were encountering in the foxholes - gas gangrene, for example - and he wanted no part of it.

He spent a lot of time in Australia and I know he met a gal down there. He worked as a fireman on board the submarine. We would get V-mail from him and it was always censored. But though he was able to see other ports, he never came home in his uniform. That really affected my mother: The fact that he never came home in uniform. For awhile when I was younger, I wanted to go and try to find the submarine, but I never did.

He ended up on the USS Grayling II, which was an old style S-209 submarine. The submarine had started on its eighth war patrol during WWII, going through Makassar Strait to the Philippine area. The crew reported that it had damaged a 6,000-ton freighter near Balikpapan and sunk a 250 ton Taki Maru-type pocket tanker by gunfire in Sibutu Passage, taking one Japanese prisoner.

After the war, the Japanese reported a sub in the Lingayen Gulf, which was most likely the Grayling. Nobody knows if the sub was torpedoed or if there was some sort of operational error that caused it to sink. If it was torpedoed, the attack was never officially recorded by the Japanese. While we knew he was missing shortly after it happened, my mother did not receive the official telegram until March 9, 1946, about 2 1/2 years later.



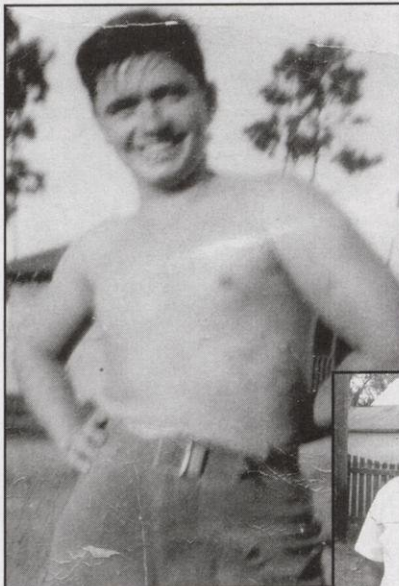
Two brothers, two very divergent fates. Both enlisted prior to World War II. Alfred (above) served as a Chief Petty Officer before returning home to Milwaukee. Henry's (left) submarine was declared missing on Sept. 9, 1943.

Marine Cook

Virgil Olson was born in Trempeleau County about 30 miles from Eau Claire and he lived on his father's farm near Big Creek until he enlisted in the Marine Corps, where he served from August 1947 until August 1951. He was a typical, rural farm boy of the time - he'd only finished 8 years of school in a one-room schoolhouse before going to working as a farmhand for his father.

I'd been out of school four years when one of my relatives told me that because I had spinal meningitis, I would never pass the physical. I guess they were hard up for troops at the time, because I passed the physical. I decided to enlist because it was getting boring at home just milking cows and walking behind four horses. I'd been in the service for about a year when I came home on leave and saw that Pa had bought two tractors (and gotten rid of the horses) and put in a milk machine. It was real easy then...

At the time, in 1947, the Marine Corps was probably the easiest to get into. I went up to the courthouse and the first recruiter I ran into was the Marine Corps recruiter. He said, "Whatcha' doing?" I said, "I came up here to enlist." [Virgil makes a zooming sound.] When I went to the courthouse, I really hadn't decided which branch I wanted to enlist in, but that decided it for me.



Virgil Olson in Alabama, 1948, and in his backyard in Cedarburg, 1994.



When I finished boot camp at Parris Island, they sent me to Cherry Point, N.C., home of the Second Marine Air Wing.

Except for cook school, I spent most of my time there. I think I became I cook because I really had no other skills except herding cattle, and they had no need for that. But I really wanted to learn a skill and cook school was open. I hadn't really cooked before - never really gave it a whole lot of thought - but I wanted to learn something, get something done. After I finished school, I returned to Cherry Point and received my assignment.

As a cook, you never really eat your own stuff. But there is a certain "cook's privilege," so to speak. If I felt like eating steak, for example, I could go to the cooler, get myself one and cook it up.

I would cook whatever the chief cook told me to cook, and things were pretty routine for us. The food was pretty palatable. We never made it too spicy - if you cook for 50 people, there's 50 different tastes right there.

We did have people on mess duty who weren't trained cooks. When they shipped people out of Parris Island, there were about 70 people in each platoon that would graduate and not have assignments. Half would get mess duty; the other half would get guard duty, both for about 60 days. Then they would rotate. If we got the first group after graduating, they were nice to handle. But when you

got those guys who had MP duty first, they were a little more difficult.

A few days after payday, we didn't have to cook for so many. A week before payday, nobody had any money, so we'd cook for 200 to 300 people. We had eight wings in our mess hall. Two were for officers and six were for enlisted. The officers had their own mess in our building, but it was separate. We served 500 to 600 total, but it wasn't hard to serve everybody because they were spread out.

I left in December 1950 and went to San Diego. Then we sailed on the USS General J.C. Breckenridge 176. I was supposed to be in the galley cooking for the trip, but they never caught it and I never pointed it out. I also came down with pneumonia two days before we arrived. We landed in Kobe, Japan and I went in the infirmary for two days. The group I landed with went on to Korea. When I got out of sick bay, I went to the officer and said, "I'm ready to go." I turned around and the guy says, "Wait a minute." He made a phone call and for two weeks I unloaded planes. This was at the end of the Chosin Reservoir Campaign and we were unloading casualties around the clock. After we'd unload the wounded, we'd jump in, they'd take us to the warehouse and we'd load the plane back up with supplies. There was no rest. I was glad to finally get to Korea two weeks later, where I served as a chief cook with four cooks reporting to me.

Virgil Olson is now a life member of VFW Post 7037 in Waubeka, where he's been a member for 50 years. He's also the commander of the local Military Order of the Cootie, a VFW auxiliary group. He is also a life member Warren Kane American Legion Post #410 and a member of the 40 & 8. He also holds a life membership in the Loyal Order of Moose in Saukville and is a member of the Civil Air Patrol Wisconsin Wing, Saukville Flight.

Elmer "Butch" Paegelow

Air Force Civil Engineer

Though the United States suspended its draft more than 20 years ago, during the draft many young men often found themselves expecting Uncle Sam's call just as they started their adult lives. Grafton's Butch Paegelow was one of them.

Nola and I were engaged to be married in September 1969, and in July 1969 I received my draft notice. We talked it over and I met with an Air Force recruiter at the Port Washington library. I signed up and the Air Force put me on a 120-day delayed enlistment status, which meant that I would be in town until the end of October.

I chose the Air Force because I thought it might be a good fit. I was - and still am - mechanically inclined. I had hoped I could get a job on the flight line, but because I am color blind they didn't want me screwing around with the wires. Instead, I became part of the civil engineers. It was a duty very similar to working for the village: we'd run heavy equipment, take care of snow removal, etc.

I graduated from tech school in February 1970 and received my assignment for Minot AFB in Minot, N.D. We all had our "dream pick" and I remember trying to get something close to home such as Volk Field here in Wisconsin, but I got North Dakota. I returned to Grafton on leave, picked up Nola and we drove back with a 5 x 8 U-Haul - we hit a snow-storm on the way out. We ended up living in town until I made E-4, then we received base housing.

It wasn't a bad life; the air force base is the third largest community in North Dakota. Our first daughter, Nikki, was born while we were in Minot, and while we didn't have to pay for the hospital stay, we did have to pay for Nola's food, so it cost us about \$7 when Nikki was born. I did a lot of hunting for duck and goose and fishing while we lived out there. As a family we did a lot of cheap and inexpensive things ... we did a lot of camping.

My job varied depending on what needed to be done. I had security clearance to go out and take care of the area around the "Christmas Tree," which is what we called the area where all the B-52s were parked at angles. I also had to keep a duffel bag packed with certain items in case something drastic happened - it had my passport and paperwork in it. Thankfully, though, nothing ever did happen. In the summer months, I would work a regular eight-hour shift. In the winter, we were on call 24/7 and we would work split shifts. I was fortunate in that what I did was more like a regular job most of the time.

Minot AFB is also part of the Strategic Air Command, which included the Minute Man missiles. They were put in during the Cold War in case the Russians would try to invade the United States through Alaska. In the winter, I would have to leave with a four-wheel drive dump truck with a front-end loader and go clean the snow out of the launch control sites. Each launch control facility controlled 10 missiles, which were in silos throughout the countryside. As far as I know, all of those sites have since been decommissioned.

I would leave for a few days at a time and travel out to them. In addition to having security clearance, I also had to follow certain security protocols when I was out there. I carried authentication papers and had so much time to unlock the gates, pass through the barbed wire fence and use my authentication code. A few times I got preoccupied and found myself spread-eagle on the ground while the security police figured out who I was.

After my time was up, I came very close to staying in the military. Nola and I talked a lot about it, but eventually decided against it. They didn't offer very high incentives for civil engineers as compared to some of the other career fields. I also received orders for Thailand, and if I had stayed in, that's where I would've had to go, though because I had so little time left, they let me stay at Minot.

I'm glad I served in the military. I think it makes you mature very quickly and shows you what life is about, what the world is about. I think that is lacking in today's society, and being in the service would really help out a lot of young men and women.

Serving also made me more patriotic, and I have since joined the American Legion. I have twice served as commander and three times as vice commander of the Rose-Harms Legion Post, which has awarded me a life membership. I was also honored as Legionnaire of the Year for Ozaukee County.



Butch served for four years in the Air Force. Here he is in 1970.

GYSGT Ivan Pabon Jr.

Marine Corps Sniper

Ivan Pabon had reached his junior year of college at the University of Puerto Rico when he ran out of money. His Boy Scout Troop leader was a Marine and, knowing that the Marines were the "hardest and the toughest," Ivan enlisted. There was one small issue however...

When I enlisted, I didn't know how to speak English. My recruiter taught me the key phrases and general orders, but that was it. During boot camp, I thought my name was, "maggot." I actually did okay because a good recruit doesn't do much talking in the first place. They discovered I couldn't speak English when a cook asked me for a tray of chicken and I didn't understand him. They kicked me out of being a squad leader, but my Senior Drill Instructor knew I could march, so I ended up getting my squad leader job back. I ended up being the company's highest shooter. I'd never shot a gun before boot camp (and my BB gun from childhood had an open sight), so I didn't bring any bad habits with me.



Thought Ivan Spent a majority of his carrier out on assignment, in 1991 he began a tour as a Drill Instructor, Senior Drill Instructor and Series Gunnery Sergeant.

Being a Sniper isn't just about shooting. You operate as a two or four man team. A Sniper is mainly an intelligence gathering position. You're trained to see the things that other people don't see. You need to infiltrate and be very sneaky. I loved it. Being a Sniper is an exceptionally high-tech occupation, with a lot sophisticated equipment but when it comes down to it you got to have guts... We always thought it was a pretty sexy job to have.

Because of my skills and ability to speak Spanish, I did a lot of work in Central and South America: Columbia, Venezuela, Peru, Honduras and El Salvador. We did a lot of counter-narcotics operations.

In 1991 I became a Drill Instructor in Parris Island SC., which was a motivating job. We had kids from all walks of life, street smart and Nintendo-generation kids. We put them in a blender, chunked them up and turned them into Marines. I served as a Drill Instructor, Senior DI and Series Gunnery Sergeant.

I then received a transfer back to a Sniper Platoon as a Platoon Sgt. The Marine Corps missions were changing and we were conducting more operations in urban areas as opposed to the jungle or elsewhere. Our platoon was deployed to the Orient, Mediterranean, Black Sea, Africa and the Middle East.

I was transferred to Special Operations Training Group, II MEF (SOTG). There I trained Marine Units for deployments to the Mediterranean as Special Operations Capable units. I also selected teams and deployed to South and Central America as the units Gunnery Sergeant. Our missions this time was to train the indigenous arm forces to conduct riverine-operations to interdict the flow of narcotics in these countries.

I ended my Marine Corps career as the Operations and Training chief for Fox Company 24th Marines retiring in 2002. Retiring from the Marines was the hardest decision I've ever made. I think after you put 20 years as a Grunt in the Corps, you can do just about anything.

Melissa Barley Pabon

Naval Storekeeper

Michigan native Melissa Barley Pabon enlisted in the Navy in 1982 on a bit of a whim - a friend had asked her to come to the local recruiter's office and, when the day came, Melissa showed up and her friend didn't.

In early 1982 I was working and attending college in Northwestern Michigan where I had grown up. I was restless and bored and wanted to get out on my own. Michigan was in a recession at the time and there were not real jobs to be had. On a whim I went to talk to the military recruiter. I ended up joining the Navy on an open contract, meaning no guaranteed schools. I attended Navy Recruit Training in Orlando, Florida. After Recruit Training, I attended an apprentice ship training school, also in Orlando. This school was preparation for living and working aboard a Navy ship.

By now it was early 1983 and there was a lot going on in Europe, mainly Beirut. There was a large military build up under way, and myself and 20 other women from my basic training company received orders to Sigonella Sicily.

On arriving in Sicily we were all assigned to the Supply Department, to help with base logistics. I was a farm girl from Michigan and it seems one of the only ones in the bunch with a valid driver's license. This got me an interview with the Base Supply Officer, who had just transferred in from NAS Detroit Michigan. He asked me to be the Supply Message Clerk because he needed someone that could drive to pick up messages... I jumped at the opportunity.

I worked in the only building on base with an elevator. I soon discovered not only was I the Supply Messenger but also the gopher. This opportunity put me in some high places with some of the most senior officers on base. I was also privy to classified and sometimes very spicy information. The experience gave me confidence. I studied for the Storekeeper rating while stationed in Sicily and was promoted to the rank of Storekeeper 3rd Class. During my tour in Sicily I met and fell in love with a Marine named Ivan Pabon from Puerto Rico. I should have married him the week I met him.

After 18 months in Sicily, I was transferred to Norfolk, Virginia to a Submarine Tender, the Emory S. Land AS-39. I again was assigned to the supply department. On weekends I traveled to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina to see Ivan and he would also come to Norfolk. During my 18 months on the ship, we sailed to Port Canaveral, Florida, Halifax, Nova Scotia and Annapolis, Maryland. In November of 1985 Ivan and I were married by the Justice of the Peace in Norfolk and then traveled to Michigan in December for a "church" wedding.

In January 1986, I was transferred to MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina. Ivan continued his duties at Camp Lejeune, and I assisted the Supply Department again.

In April 1988, Ivan and I got orders together to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. I was with Naval Station Supply and Ivan was with Marine Barracks. I loved being in Cuba during that time. Navy ships came down to Cuba to train, and we supplied them with food and repair parts.

In November 1990, I was transferred to MCAS Beaufort South Carolina Station Supply. Ivan was at Parris Island. By now Ivan and I had two children. I really liked my job in Beaufort. I worked in the warehouse driving forklift, doing inventory, and also working in the purchasing department. After four years, the Navy was ready to send me back to sea duty in Italy. Ivan was still on the Drill Field and the children were young. After much deliberation, I decided to end my Navy career at the end of my enlistment in 1994.

I went back to work in the same warehouse about three months later working for a government contractor. I dedicated my life to my children and my husband's career and moved our family and started over for the next eight years until he retired.

I learned a lot about myself and others during my time in the service. It made me a better person and who I am today.



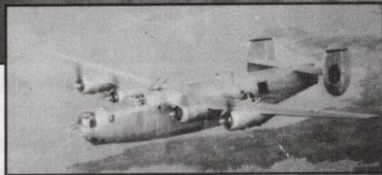
Though Melissa was in the Navy and Ivan was in the Marines, they found each other. Here they are in Sicily, 1982.

Marvin Paulin

Nose Gunner on a B-24 Bomber

Port Washington High School graduate Marvin Paulin entered the Army Air Corps in November 1942 and received his gunner's wings at the AAF Gunnery School at Tyndall Field, Fla. Here is his story, including an excerpt from a column that appeared in the *Ozaukee Press* called "Around the Globe."

After finishing his training in the United States, CPL Marvin Paulin became a nose gunner on a B-24 Liberator. More than 18,000 of these planes were produced and could carry a crew of up to 11 men. The B-24 had a maximum range of 2,200 miles fully loaded and could reach a top speed of 290 mph, even with a full armament load. As a nose gunner, Marvin had quite a breathtaking view that was unfortunately often obscured by enemy aircraft, as his clipping from the *Ozaukee Press* notes: *Headquarters, 13th Army Air Corps, Philippines - After spending*



eight months in the Southwest Pacific, Staff Sergeant Marvin Paulin has completed his first tour of duty overseas and is returning to his Port Washington home on leave.

[A] veteran of 41 missions, entailing over 420 hours of combat flying against the Japs, Sergeant Paulin has been serving as the nose gunner of a Liberator in the Jungle Air Force's "Long Rangers"...

He has been presented the Air Medal and his third Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster. He also holds the Philippine Liberation Ribbon and the Asiatic Campaign ribbon with four battle stars.

Sergeant Paulin has bombed Jap targets in the Philippines, Borneo, Celebes and Halmaheras, in addition to sinking Jap shipping in waters surrounding Borneo and the Celebes. His plane has over 2,000 tons of [Japanese] shipping, sun or damaged.



His most lucrative raid occurred near the Borneo coast when his plane sighted a 1,000-ton freighter and sank it. After taking off, long before dawn, they had just entered their search area when they spotted the freighter, stranded on a reef. Dropping down to deck level, they roared in with Sgt. Paulin, having a field day, sweeping the decks of anti-aircraft gunners from his position in the nose.

As his plane pulled up to miss the ship's masts, they dropped their bombs, blowing holes in its sides, causing it to settle completely on the reef in the shallow water. Later three small coastal freighters were disposed of in the same treatment. All together, his plane accounted for over 1,600 tons of shipping that day.

SSgt Marvin Paulin flew 41 missions entailing more than 420 hours of combat flying in the South Pacific.

On a similar mission in Makassar Straits, his plane sighted what looked from their altitude to be another coastal freighter. Dropping down to deck level, they started their bombing and strafing run, but discovered they were attacking a Jap destroyer, but it was too late to turn.

So, in the face of the hail of anti-aircraft fire, they continued on the run, sweeping the decks to silence the anti-aircraft guns. Only one such run was enough, so climbing to 8,000 feet, they dropped their bombs, but left the scene before any damage could be determined. Later, after the reporting the ship's position, "Long Ranger" B-24s went out, [and] sunk the destroyer with direct hits.

Marvin received the Air Medal in 1945. He was recognized for his sustained operational flight missions in the Southwest Pacific Area from December 25, 1944 until January 28, 1945. A letter from Lieutenant Commander George C. Kenney to his mother, Lenore Paulin, regarding this award read: "Almost every hour of every day your son, and the sons of other American mothers are doing just such things here in the Southwest Pacific. This is a very real and tangible contribution to victory and to peace."

Marvin now lives with his wife in Arizona.

Richard “Dick” Paulin As interviewed by his wife, Agnes Paulin

Air Force Draftsman

Grafton native Dick Paulin was working as a carpenter’s apprentice when he joined the Air Force in March 1951. He enlisted with two other buddies: Jim Hilgart and Ken Schanen.

The three of us had decided we wanted to be in the SeaBees. Since I was a carpenter’s apprentice and Jim worked for his father’s excavating business, we thought this was a good idea. We signed up for the Air Force. The recruiter was evidently a little more convincing.

I was separated from both Jim and Kenny on the first day. We were supposed to bring our birth certificates on the first day and my mother sent my baptismal certificate instead. Obviously, that wasn’t the correct documentation. I shipped out the next day.

On our first day of arrival we kept hearing the other airmen shouting from their barracks to come over. They kept saying it would be fun. Little did we know that the party was really a “GI party.” It consisted of scrubbing floors and deep cleaning toilet bowls with a razor. It was sort of an introduction; we knew there weren’t going to be fun parties anymore.

I did basic training at Lackland AFB as part of Squadron 3705, Flight 974. This squadron and flight were selected to be the barracks and personnel that dignitaries would go to when they visited the base. We had to keep our barracks clean and always be dressed properly. It was not a desirable position to have. Jim and Ken were on the opposite end of the base from where I was at.

After basic training, I went to camera repair school in Denver.

After graduation, I was assigned to the Second Air Rescue Squadron at Clark AFB in the Philippines. We shipped out of San Francisco with stops in Hawaii and Guam before landing in Manila. It took about 21 days by ship. There was very little to do. We primarily slept and ate. Having been around coal boats in Port Washington, I had envisioned an ocean ship to be much larger. To my surprise, the ship we were on was about the quarter of the size of a coal boat. The showers were all salt-water showers, so you only showered as a last resort.

Once I arrived at Clark Air Force Base, I was informed that all though I was an authorized camera repairman, they did not have any aircraft cameras! I had learned how to inspect parachutes and had studied to be an aircraft radio operator. Though I completed the course, I never developed the proficiency to be a radio operator. Later on, I was reassigned as a draftsman.

Except for being so far from home, this was good duty. I was immersed in a new culture for the first time and it was an entertaining experience. We had a lot of free time to enjoy the country and the Filipino people really loved the American G.I. My friend, Joe Page from Chicago, and I spent a weekend in Manila with just 50 cents between us. People would buy us drinks, give us food and let us sleep in their places. We did some duck-pin bowling. They were also very fun-loving people. I took side trips to Hong Kong, Okinawa, Japan, and various cities in the Philippines.

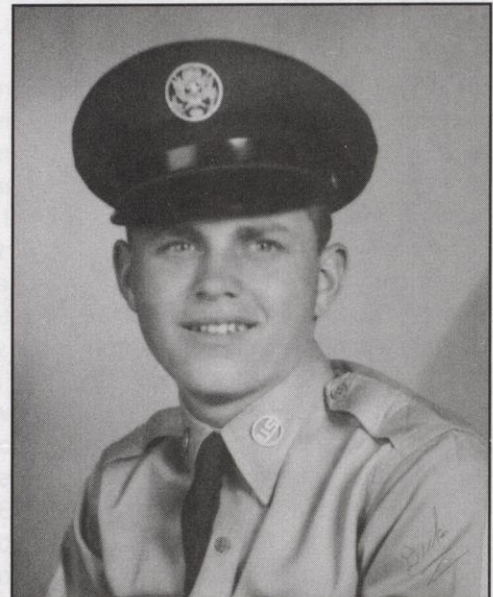
Service life in the Philippines was really tough. Due to an agreement with the Filipino government, the United States needed to employ a certain number of Filipino people. We had houseboys to shine our shoes, make our bed, do all the cleaning and cook KP for us.

After two years in the Philippines, I was assigned to the 25th Air Division at McCord AFB in Tacoma, Wash. This required another 21-day ocean cruise; 500 of us shared a room in the cargo hold in the bottom of the ship, just like on our way over to the Philippines.

In Tacoma, I worked as a draftsman. As a draftsman, we had monthly progress charts, maps to draw and other types of planning boards to work with. One of my buddies there was Jerry Gerbitz from Beaver Dam.

It was good to be back in the United States, but the rainy weather in Tacoma was hard to get used to. It sure was nice having a car again, which I did not have in the Philippines. This is also where I met a beautiful girl named Agnes, who became my wife of 50 years and we’re still going strong.

Life in the military was a great maturing experience. It took a person from high school and prepared him for his introduction into life after the military experience. I’m very glad I did it and enjoyed it while I was doing it.



Dick served in the Philippines and Tacoma, Washington while in the Air Force.

Navy Machinist Mate, (Nuclear Trained) during Vietnam

Daniel Ramthun was a college student at UW-Milwaukee when he decided to join the Navy. He says he was busy studying "dynamics" instead of "statics" (a real UW-Milwaukee course) at the pool tables during exams.

I enlisted in the Navy before there was a lottery. Had there been one, I may have taken my chances with it. When my grade point dropped in college, I received a letter saying that I was not welcome back. At that time, if you dropped out or flunked out of college, you were likely to be drafted. I immediately knew that I didn't want to crawl around in foxholes - that eliminated the Army and the Marines, and if you were in either of those two branches, you knew you would end up in Vietnam. I remember telling the recruiter, "Well, I've looked at my arms and I don't have feathers, so I'm going to join the Navy." It was really a toss up, though.

I signed up through the Cache Program, which was a delayed enlistment. But to be in the Nuclear Power program, I had to sign up for six years. This was because the program required so much schooling. I enlisted as of July 1967 and had a three-month delay to mid-October, though I received a letter saying that I had to report at the end of September. That wasn't good - my sister was getting married in October. So, my mom got on the phone to Senator Bill Proxmire and the next thing I knew, the recruiter called and I was back to October!

I went to Great Lakes for boot camp and my Machinist Mate A School. I would go home every time we had weekend liberty - which was every weekend during A School - and I was able to go home for Christmas, too. When I finished my initial training, I went down to the USS Perry - a World War II destroyer - in Mayport, Fla. It was a three-month temporary assignment while I awaited the next Nuclear Power School class to start. We went on two cruises - one to the Virgin Islands and one to the North Atlantic for a NATO operation. In the North Atlantic it was so rough you could pick, at any given time, whether you wanted to walk on the walls or the floor.

I then went to Nuclear Power School in Bainbridge, Maryland, which lasted about six months. It was low-end college-level classes, though they didn't have any pool tables there. I came home on leave after school and married my wife in May 1969. She then accompanied me back to my next phase of training which was at a nuclear prototype site owned by General Electric but run as a training command by the Navy.

I was then stationed on the USS Long Beach CGN9, which is a guided missile cruiser. I spent the rest of my tour after finishing school on the Long Beach. I picked up the ship when they came back from their first Vietnam tour. I picked it up in Long Beach and we immediately went up to Mare Island and then we went into dry dock. Nuclear power ships do get refueled once in awhile. There were the original cores that were put in and then the cores we put in, and that was it from 1965 until 1995 when it was decommissioned. Nuclear ships are still steam powered; it's just a different power source.

I did two tours to Vietnam. The first time I went over I had a six-month tour that last 8 1/2 months. We'd do four weeks on patrol and one week at a liberty port, which were places like Manila, Bangkok or Yakuza, Japan or Subic Bay.

We went around in circles in the Tonkin Gulf. My job on the ship was to make it run. We were on line and the Long Beach's job was to keep down any air traffic. We would use missiles. It had two sets of Terrier missiles on the foredeck and on the aft - that would be the square end - there were Talos missiles. We were looking for MIGs to shoot down, though we had no successes either time I was on. But the first time the ship was over there (before my time) they had been online for less than a couple of days and they had three MIGs shot down. That was thanks to an experimental radar - it was a big square box on top of the Long Beach that enclosed the electronically aimed radar. It was an experiment at the time, but it was very long range and very accurate.

The Vietnamese, however, learned little tricks. They would fire up their missile sites' radar and we would track that. They knew just exactly how long from the time we fired the missile until it would hit its target. They would shut their radar off just in time so our missiles would have nothing to track and it would overshoot them every time. But because of the first Vietnam tours, whenever we were on line, they would put their MIGs in their hangars and not fly them. There was very, very low air traffic. They knew everything just like we knew everything. They had surveillance and spotters just like we did.

During the time I was at sea, my wife was home with our children. When I went on the first Vietnam tour, she went home with our son, who was born at Travis AFB in California. My wife and our son stayed with her parents during that first tour. Our daughter was born during the time she spent at home in Milwaukee. I received a telegram on board ship that said, "Guess what? You're a daddy again!" But it wasn't a surprise, of course.

When we were on our tours, we had to entertain ourselves. We'd have talent shows to kill the evenings. We'd have barbeques on "Steel Beach," which were certain areas onboard ship. During lunch hour when it was nice - it was that way most of the time - you could go to Steel Beach to lay out and tan.

Ken Rappold

As told to Vicki Schanen

Postal Worker in Hawaii during World War II

Ken Rappold is a lifelong resident of Cedarburg and now lives about a block from where he was born. He was one of four children, three boys and one girl. His two older brothers served in the Army during World War II.

In 1943 I received a notice from the government cordially inviting me to attend instruction for the service. I went to the draft board and I was given a choice as to which branch of the service I wanted to enter. Two other fellows from Cedarburg and I all joined the Navy because we wanted to do something different.

All three of us were sent to boot camp at the Naval Training Station in Farragut, Idaho. We arrived on Good Friday. Being 20 years old and away from home for the first time, that was kind of sad. The reason why they had training inland was because they didn't want all the fellows training on the coasts in case there was an invasion.

I had a short leave after basic training and then I was sent to an ACORN unit at Port Hueneme, Calif. After we were finished, we were scheduled to go to Hawaii for further training.

While we were waiting for available transportation to Hawaii, we were temporarily assigned to the U.S. Naval Net Depot in Tiburon, Calif. There we worked 12-hour shifts assembling submarine nets. Sitting on a cement floor for 12 hours at a time putting u-bolts on cables made for a hard, cold night.

The submarine nets were huge, flat nets made of steel cable of various diameters. They were used at harbor entrances to detect submarines trying to enter. They would either stop the submarines or they were wired to send a signal to the Coast Guard.

Our transportation turned out to be a Dutch freighter. We did not have an escort for protection and the ship had to change direction every seven minutes - the zig-zagging supposedly stopped any submarine from getting into position to fire a torpedo with any amount of accuracy. Evidently it worked, because we arrived safely in Hawaii.

The fourth day after we arrived in Hawaii, we were on our way back from the rifle range via a Navy "bus," which was really a semi-truck with the upper half of the sides removed. We were coming around a sugar-cane field when we were sideswiped by an Army truck. I was sitting on the steps because the bus was so crowded, and I ended up fracturing my left knee. I spent two months in the hospital because infection had set in. I've had seven knee surgeries since then. I had the last one in July 2004.

I received a letter from one of the fellows who went down to Apamama in the Gilbert Island Group telling me that there were direct hits on the landing barges, and a lot of the fellows I knew had been killed. These were the people who had gone on ahead of me, and had the accident not occurred, I would have been with them.

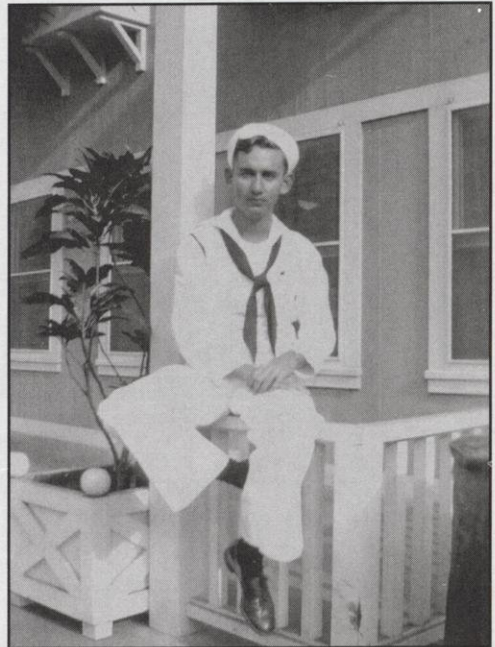
After my release from the hospital, I was put on light duty and eventually assigned to work in the post office at Barber's Point, a Naval Air Station. I was assigned to a CASU (carrier, aircraft, service unit) unit. The Navy pilots practiced taking off and landing on land there before being assigned to aircraft carriers. They used prop planes at the time and I remember one pilot lost his head. I don't think he could see the propeller spinning. Other than that, my time there was not too exciting. I had my share of guard duty besides working in the post office. I sorted mail and made out money orders.

I had my first plane ride on a torpedo bomber while I was in Hawaii. A pilot that I knew pretty well asked me if I wanted to go for a ride. We went up and, unknown to me, he was on a practice bombing run. We went up and he aimed at this island. Needless to say, I should have worn brown pants.

When I had enough points, I left Hawaii and came back to the States to get married. My fiancée and I got engaged right before I left for the service.

We only had nine days to get everything ready, but she did all the work. This was during rationing, so when someone got married, you'd have to go around and collect coupons from people so you could have enough sugar for your wedding cake. My father-in-law butchered a calf so we could have veal for our wedding meal.

My wife and I went back to Hawaii in 1970 and went back to Barber's Point. We parked outside the gate and the Marine guard came over. I mentioned that I had served there and he invited me to come on base and take a tour. There were a lot of changes, but it was nice to see it again.



Ken served with the Navy from 1943 until 1946. Here he is in Honolulu.

Aviation Mechanic

Earl Reinke served with the Navy from 1943 until 1946. He later returned to military service as a member of the Air Force Reserve from 1950 until 1952. His younger brother served with him in the Air Force Reserves.

I enlisted in the Navy right after high school. When I originally enlisted in the Naval Reserve's air arm, I wanted to go to pilot training. I also had cousins and an uncle who had served in the Navy. However when I was in high school at Boys Tech in Milwaukee, I had taken a class in aviation mechanics. I got within a few months of graduation and they needed mechanics in a hurry. They did send my diploma to my parents, though.

After I finished training at Great Lakes and my advanced training, they needed eight electricians for the Carrier Aircraft Service Unit (CASU). That was split between southern England and Norfolk, Va. We would trade off back and forth, and we became crew members when we were in transport. There were aircraft all over the place.



Earl working on a B456 Aircraft engine in Korea.

We worked on whatever needed to be serviced. You had to learn everything, but you could learn a lot from the other fellows. Sometimes we had to fly out to the carriers because they never really came to us.

We typically started at 6 a.m., but we'd be there whenever an aircraft came in. We'd work until we were done. There was seniority involved - the new people worked at night. There were certain things we had to do after 30 hours and 60 hours on an aircraft. We also did work after 120 hours, and that was almost a complete overhaul. Sometimes we would scrap out an airplane for parts, but that was very rare.

However, parts were at a premium. There just wasn't that much stuff around.

We also always had trouble having enough tools. I remember one time a fellow was working on a PBY, which sits in the water. He was on the wing and checking the light. The PBY was going up and down, up and down, and the guy was getting seasick. Pretty soon he stood up and accidentally kicked his toolbox into the water!

I was at Norfolk when the war ended in 1946. It was great. Everybody got loaded. I was actually discharged on July 4, 1946, which was one of my most happy days.

I enlisted in the Air Force Reserve at O'Hare Field along with my younger brother in January 1950. We had a cousin in there, too, and we'd share rides down to the field. I really enjoyed my weekends with the Reserve. We did a lot of flying all around the country.

But then the Korean War started. What we happened to be - a transport, troop-carrier squadron - was immediately needed. About three weeks after the war started in 1950 we were called into active duty. The funny part was, being in the Reserves, all we had was castoff Army uniforms. Nobody was dressed the same and some of the people only had half a uniform. There was more stuff in the surplus stores at that time than what we had.

We trained for a month at Shaw Air Force Base in South Carolina. We were there for about a month when they decided we needed to be sworn in - we were in such a hurry leaving O'Hare that they forgot to do that. On our way to Korea, I remember we unloaded at Yokahama and got put on a Japanese passenger train. I remember the bunks were small, but that's because the Japanese are small people. We ended up on the island of Kyushu, Japan at the old RAF Brady Field. The planes came in and we started loading ammunition right away. I ended up spending two years there and we lived in tents the whole time. We finally did end up getting one-piece fatigues. And after about a year, we also did get a few replacements and they were wearing blue uniforms. We thought they were from the Royal Air Force. We had no idea our Air Force had changed colors because we were still wearing the crummy old ones.

My job there was to be a mechanic and sometimes a crew member. In addition to doing repair and maintenance, we would also act as crew members. We would fly the planes to Korea full of supplies and then bring back the wounded. Sometimes, though, we would fly "kickers," which was where you didn't land. We'd throw the supplies out the window with parachutes on them. We always had to fill in on the crews because we were short people. I was able to go home only when my two-year Reserve enlistment was up.



(Above) A downed C-46 near the Yalu River, the dividing line between China and North Korea, became spare parts for another plane, which was successfully repaired and out of the combat zone.

Caroline "Carol" Winnemuller Renzel

Phm.M Second Class during World War II

Back in 1943 when our country was at war, my two brothers enlisted, one in the Navy and one in the Army. I had graduated in 1941 and got a job as a receptionist for a doctor in Port Washington. When I became 20, a recruiter for the Navy WAVES came to Port Washington and I enlisted.

I was sent to Hunter College in the Bronx in January 1944. I spent six weeks at Hunter College learning how to march. I also learned about the service. At the end of the six weeks we were given aptitude tests and it was determined that I was suited for the Hospital Corps.

I was then shipped to Bethesda, Md., to the Bethesda Naval Hospital for six weeks of training, cramming seven to eight hours a day learning about hospital work. After being tested at the end of that time, I was given a rating of Phm. M 3rd Class and a raise of \$21 a month.

I was then shipped to Camp Lejeune, a naval hospital on a Marine base, in New River, N.C. There we took care of injured Marines who had been shipped back from some of the islands where they had fought. We also took care of officers who had other illnesses, such as diabetes, tuberculosis, etc., who were scheduled to be mustered out. After six months, I took another exam and was promoted to Phm. M. 2nd Class.

I was then shipped to a LTA [Lighter than Air] Base in Weeksville, Elizabeth City, N.C. There they had a family hospital that primarily cared for pregnant wives of the officers on base. We spent our time taking care of mothers and their new babies.

It was also at this base where we were given the opportunity of going up in a dirigible. We were flown over Kitty Hawk, the site of the Wright Brothers' first successful flight. I, along with a few other girls, was invited to come into the cockpit and maneuver the blimp. We hovered over the ocean and watched a boat hauling in its catch for the day. I think it was a tuna fishing vessel.

This LTA base had seven dirigibles and they flew overhead often. It was there that I also learned that ropes hung down from these ships and that sailors had to come running out to catch the ropes, lower the blimp and tie it up.

After several months at that base, we were told we could sign up to go overseas. I selected Hawaii. I was then shipped to Shoemaker, Calif., and put on an APA ship to go overseas. This took seven days and we landed at Navy 128 at Pearl Harbor. After a few days we were transported to Base 8 Hospital, a group of quonset huts near Pearl City in Oahu. There I worked at dispensing supplies to the wards, and I also worked in an orthopaedic ward for a time. While at this hospital, VE Day was declared. Shortly afterwards they decommissioned that hospital and closed it down. I then was shipped to Navy 128 at Pearl Harbor and our duty was on Ford Island in the middle of Pearl Harbor. We had to take a ferry to and from Navy 128. I worked in a dispensary, bringing medical files up to date.

After a few months we were shipped to a new place, Aiea Heights Hospital, high above the surroundings near the town of Aiea and in Oahu. There I again worked in Property and Accounting, dispensing medicines and supplies. While I was there, VJ Day was declared and shortly thereafter a huge parade was organized. All the military people and vehicles were assembled; we all paraded for a mile or more down one of the busy highways in Oahu. The parade ended at the cemetery where all of the casualties of Pearl Harbor were buried; hundreds and hundreds of white crosses lined up across an expanse of land there.

In June 1946 I was shipped back to the States and then to Great Lakes Naval Center for discharge. It had been a wonderful, enlightening and educational 2 1/2 years. I was glad I had the courage to sign up and have had this great experience.



Carol had been working in a Port Washington doctor's office when she was recruited by the Navy WAVES recruiter.

Thomas Richart

Army Band Member

Grafton's Tom Richart had graduated from college and had spent two years working for the USDA Forest Service including time at the Clam Lake Job Corps Conservation Center near Park Falls. It was there where he received his first draft notice. He would later go on to audition for the Army Band with his weapon of choice: a trombone.

I received my Selective Service System Notice to reclassify me to 1-A in 1965. I requested an Occupational Deferment stating that I could better serve my country fighting the "War on Poverty" than the "War in Vietnam." A year later I was reclassified 1-A and on Dec. 16, 1966, my Draft Board sent my Order to Report for Induction.

During my testing and orientation week I decided to audition as a trombone player for an army band. I had not played for three years but my experience in bands - Kiel High School, Oshkosh College and Kiel Municipal Band must have helped. Upon graduation from basic training, I was assigned to the 282nd Army Band at Ft. Jackson, S.C., so my move was only one mile down the road from "Tank Hill." This 42-piece band had six



Tom Richart in a Dongducheon, Korea marketplace, 1968.

trombone players (MOS 02E20). Since I also had administrative and typing skills, I soon became the morning report clerk and later the band clerk.

My biggest difficulty in the band was reading dance band music. The primary role of our band was to play for basic training and advanced infantry class graduations. We also provided concerts on and off the base for goodwill and recruitment purposes.

I received promotions to Private First Class and Specialist E-4 at the minimum required length of service due to my clerical support for the 1st Sergeant and Chief Warrant Officer, who was the band director. Making a good pot of coffee also helped!

In November, I was on a Levy with five other band members for overseas assignments. Three went to Vietnam and three went to South Korea, which is where I went in January 1968. When I arrived in Seoul, South Korea, I had to audition. The Army had three bands in Korea: the 8th Army Band in Seoul, the 2nd Division Band up on the DMZ and the 7th Division Band at Camp Casey, 18 miles south of the DMZ. I was assigned to the 7th Division Band, a 28-piece band with four trombone players.

On my third day in Korea, 40 North Korean soldiers infiltrated and tried to get to the Blue House to kill the South Korean president. Thirty-nine of the infiltrators were killed and one was captured. The next day, the U.S. spyship, the Pueblo, was captured by the North Koreans.

The band was very busy during the spring to fall months. We played for Change of Command Ceremonies, concerts, funerals, football halftime, Easter sunrise service and even an Easter egg hunt. Occasionally the 7th Division would have a two- to five-day field exercise. During those times the band members would provide guard duty for the HHC. During the day we would have rifles and at night only big sticks. I guess they didn't trust band members to carry a gun after dark!

Since we were part of a United Nations Force, the Honor Guard at 7th Division Headquarters consisted of troops from Thailand, South Korea and the United States. We played the three national anthems and had cannons fire the appropriate salute pending the rank of the honored guest. We always played the same song for the "pass and review," a Korean folk song "Arirang" (pronounced "A-DeyDong").

Two band members were KATUSAs [Koreans Attached to the U.S. Army]. Our Korean flute player was a recent college graduate so he "enlisted" me and two other American band members to conduct American Literature Classes at Seoul's Dankook University for his younger college friends. We did this for a few Sunday afternoons. After our class, they would escort us to Seoul's historical places. It was a win-win experience for all of us.

Another band member and I traveled to Japan for a five-day vacation. While there we were invited to a family's private home for supper. As part of our tour group, we were in a taxi/minibus accident. The travel agency owner treated the two of us for lunch and later sent two of his female employees to accompany us to the USO Club in Tokyo. I guess he wanted to make sure we were okay and would not sue his company for any injuries. He said he once trained to be a Kamikaze pilot but Japan ran out of planes before his time came up.

I received a 30-day early out and was discharged as a Specialist E-5 on Dec. 17, 1968. During my two years in service, my girlfriend Marlene Winkler and I became engaged and we got married on Feb. 1, 1969. Our courtship was mostly corresponding via letters. We still have all of our letters.

Alfred Schanen

As told to his nephew, Nick Schanen

Member of the Third Armored Division in World War II

Alfred Schanen was interviewed at his home in Ocala, Fla. The Grafton native was working at his parents' tavern in Grafton, as a bartender, cook and "all-around" employee at the time he was drafted.

I had to help to fight the war. I was inducted into the U.S. Army at their facilities on Capitol Drive in Milwaukee. We were sent to Camp Polk, La., and we stayed there about a year. They hadn't even finished building the camp when we arrived. They had barracks but they weren't completely built.

At Camp Polk, we had 13 weeks of basic training and then a year of specialty training. My specialty was reconnaissance. We were then sent to the Mojave Desert for two more months of training. I remember there were a lot of scorpions in the desert and one of the trainees with us died from a snake bite.

We then headed toward the East Coast. We stayed at Camp Pickett, Virginia and Indiantown Gap, Pa for another six or seven months before we left the port of New York. We rode aboard the US Army Transport John Erickson. It took 10 days for us to get to Liverpool, England. We had rough seas going over there; I wasn't seasick, but I was glad that we made it there.

I was assigned to the 105 mm tank. I was an ammunition loader for close-range tanks. Combat was very tough, both mentally and physically. It was very stressful.

We started by going up Omaha Beach. We made our way to Stuttgart, Germany. My duties were recon at that point. The worst battle for the Third Armored Division was the Battle of the Bulge, specifically the St. Lo breakthrough. That was really about the worst for us.

It was always very scary for us. We always had heavy incoming "mail." That's what we called enemy artillery fire - it was incoming mail to us. It was always pretty close to us. The Germans always liked to come over and drop their bombs at night, but thankfully, those were further away from us. If they'd had known the 3rd Armored was below them, I wouldn't be here.

We had very long days - there were always long rides ahead of us. When we started to go through Germany, we didn't have the chance to clean up for a couple of days because we were on the run. One day, I think we made about 40 miles. In the Battle of the Bulge, it was all snow and cold - it was the worst, very tough fighting. We didn't sleep or eat a whole lot in Germany. We mostly survived on C-rations. Our kitchen train was in back of us about a mile and they would come up when we had a break, they'd come up and feed us. We also got relieved every couple of days. They'd bring us back, put in replacements, and then we'd return. We had to sleep on the ground because it was impossible to dig a foxhole in the winter. The ground was frozen and had a few feet of snow on it. We did have bedrolls. We'd sleep in our half track on the ground right next to it. It was so dark there you couldn't see anything anyway. What kept us going? I know I had a real desire to stay alive and I didn't take any chances. I was lucky that I came back.

I was glad that the war was over, that we had won - it ended on my birthday! We were 15 miles from Berlin and ready to go in when the war ended. We all went back to Frankfurt and celebrated. Everybody stayed in Frankfurt for a few days before they went home. I stayed a little longer to do some photography work for the Division. We took over a German photographer - there were three of us from Wisconsin - and we stayed and developed pictures of the 3rd Armored and the action we'd seen. I kept a copy of each of them for myself and I have a whole book of them.

We had quite a celebration when I came home. Later they formed a 3rd Armored Division reunion and we started in 1948. That first year we had about 1,500-1,700 men from all over the world. Now, we're down to 250. I'm about the only one left from the Recon company.

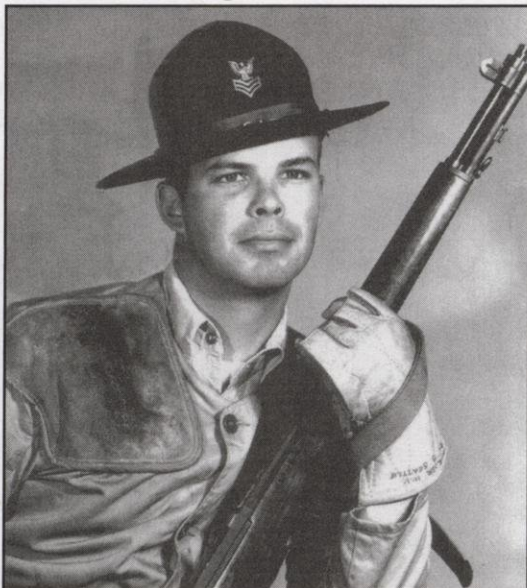


Here Alfred is shown with his war bride, Marie, and with his typical mode of transportation during World War II. His twin brother, Alphonse, also served in World War II as a medic. A third brother, Sylvester, had been drafted into the Army Air Corps and served in Italy.

Aerial photographer in the Naval Reserves

Town of Grafton resident Warren served with the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1952 until 1964. Both he and his brother served in the military. Warren's brother went into ROTC and was in the Army Tank Corps and Reserves, eventually retiring as a lieutenant colonel after 22 years of service.

There was a law on the books before the Korean War that you had to join the service at some time in your life. I was still in high school when the Korean War started and I graduated right in the middle of it. I had joined the Reserves in December 1952 when I was 17 - I wanted to fulfill my military obligation and I liked the Navy. Also, photography was my hobby and I was able to strike for aerial intelligence when I enlisted.



(above) Warren was not just an expert with a camera - he was also awarded Expert Rifle and Expert Pistol Medals while on Navy Teams in firearms competitions.

In the Naval Reserves, we drilled every Tuesday at the Reserve Center in downtown Milwaukee at the old Marine Bank. They had a submarine and a destroyer tied up there. I wore my Naval Reserve uniform that day. On Wednesdays, I had to wear my Army uniform to school. I learned a whole new set of skills with the ROTC and participated in the rifle teams. But once I finished my ROTC commitment, I didn't continue on with the army. The Army even tried drafting me, but I got that straightened out.

You couldn't transfer out of a surface unit until you were a striker and a billet opened up. Two years later, in 1954, I was able to transfer to the Aviation wing at the Naval Station in Glenview, Ill. Once there, I was able to get more training. They had a big photo lab there. In early 1955, I was also sent to Naval Photography School in Pensacola, Fla.

Photographic technology at that time was quite primitive when you compare it to today's standards. We worked in black and white; the equipment was large and quite heavy. The processing used an entirely different technology than now. As PHAs, we weren't part of the air crew that flew the planes, but sometimes we could ask for stick time. When you're around people doing their jobs, you can pick things up. It was also probably a good idea to have some knowledge of what was going on in case something would happen. Flying all those years in all types of aircraft, I did pick up a bit, but I wasn't trained as a pilot.

I did get to travel quite a bit on training missions. Depending on what squadrons you were attached to or assigned to, that would decide what type of aircraft you flew in and where you went. I went to Morocco, flew over the Straits of Gibraltar and spent some time in Europe.

My squadron in Glenview did get activated in 1961 and 1962 during the Berlin buildup. A lot of air squadrons were called up, along with Wisconsin's 32nd Division. Our squadron was a tracker squadron and we went out to NAS Seattle. My wife and son were able to join me out there; every three nights we'd have to stay onboard, but we were able to live with our families. We did submarine patrols for Russian submarines and had regular flight operations. We also took aerial cameras and flew very low over ships - it was called 'rig ships.' We'd bring the pictures back and analyze them, looking for electronic surveillance equipment and spying techniques. During this time, I also served as a member of the combat air crew on flights. When I wasn't on flights, I'd do other camera work and photo processing. Our missions really varied - we did some work in Seattle because that was also the year that the city hosted the World's Fair.

One of my regrets in life is that I never went on to get a pilot's license. One of my hobbies now is flight simulators, and some of these simulators and games are the same planes I flew in, and the simulation is pretty accurate.

After I graduated from high school, I was still in the Reserves. We probably would have been called up to go Korea, but that ended in July 1953. I had also started attending college for commercial art and photography, so I also had to join the Army ROTC for at least two years, so I was technically in two branches at once.

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During the Berlin buildup in 1962, Warren served at NAS Seattle.

Floyd "Bud" Schmidt

As told to Vicki Schanen

Aircraft Repair and Maintenance in the Air Force

After graduating from high school in 1960, Bud was working in a machine factory in Elkhart Lake. In the back of his mind, however, he envisioned eventually being in the service. It didn't sit well with his parents, but Bud felt that it was a good time to pursue his interest because it was peace time and there was no unrest going on.

I didn't want to get drafted and not have a choice of where I wanted to go. I thought that there could be a draft on the horizon and I also wanted to eventually have the benefits - if I ever needed them - being in the service would give me, such as VA services. Being in the service and representing your family was also honorable.

When I look back, I think I made the right choice.

I remember getting off the bus at Lackland AFB and one, burly staff sergeant - Sgt Bishop - put us all in a row. What he had to say about us was not very nice. It took our egos right down into the grass. It was standardization: Everybody looked the same, everybody ate the same, everybody slept the same.

At the end of training, I was sent to Shepherd, AFB for electronics training. The country itself was no big improvement; we were still in Texas. Oil country, tornado country - that's where we were. We were trained in aircraft repair and maintenance. There were different schools there, and we had to become familiar with them all.

After we graduated, we received our Airman Third Class rating and our permanent assignment. Our orders were posted on the bulletin board; mine was Plattsburgh AFB in New York, which was part of the Strategic Air Command. I was there for three and a half years.

I was assigned to the 4108th Organizational Maintenance Squadron. Some of the maintenance and repair we did was on KC-97 G tanker. They had reciprocating engines, four of them. Their job was to fly fuel to jet bombers in flight. There were about 25 of them on the base at the time. One of our jobs was to inspect these planes. They carried the jet fuel and "AV gas," which had an octane rating of 115/145. It was very, very volatile.

They had additional tanks - tip tanks - which carried fuel on the wings. The tanks were about the size of a large canoe. They were disposable; either one could be dropped if you were getting out range to lighten the plane and make it more agile. One of our inspection jobs was to check the release racks on these tanks.

Another one of our jobs was a 25-hour flap inspection. Most airplanes are equipped with wing flaps. In the inboard part of the wing there is a large area that's not part of the control of the aircraft, per se. It is a large panel designed to drop back to provide either lift or braking. They are operated with jack screws, which were operated electrically. Each flap had a number of these screws and they all had to be tested.

Each plane had an NCO assigned to it. His job was to keep track of everything. At one point, I was directed into that. I remember one day I was working with the crew chief. When we worked, we'd each been assigned a box of tools - he had his and I had mine. We were working on a double-decker plane and we had fastened our tools to one of the decks instead of taking them to our own vehicle. This was on a weekend and Monday morning we came back on the flightline and some of the guys were kidding us about having to buy a new set of tools. The plane we had been working on had been assigned to a weekend flight and the crew. The gist of the story was that the plane went on a training flight. They took it downstate and they had the heaters on, which were located in four places. In the process of the flight, the engineer went down and noticed that the cabinet heater was glowing red. It got progressively worse, and they put the plane on automatic pilot toward Canada. The crew bailed - all of whom made it with the exception of two (I know one fellow's chute never opened). It came up on Canadian radar and they sent fighters up to take a look at it: All the lights were on, all the engines were on, but no crew! It ended up in Labrador and crashed. And, as far as they know, it never started on fire.



(above) Floyd reported for duty with the Air Force in 1961. (left) Here's Floyd with Jim Shipley at Soderstrom Fjord, Greenland, 1963.

Ralph Schmidt As told to his nephew, Allen Buchholz

Part of the Eighth Wave of Marines on Iwo Jima

I was 16 when I borrowed a deer rifle from my uncle, Ralph Schmidt, of Belgium. The heavy military rifle took strange ammunition designated 6.5JAP. I had no appreciation for where this rifle had come from and the sacrifices made during its capture on a small Pacific island by a twenty-two year old Marine. Now I do.

The day after the attack on Pearl Harbor I wanted to enlist, but I agreed to wait one year to help on the farm. One year later to the day I joined the Marines. I served in the First Paratroopers Division at Vella Lavella, New Caledonia, Guadalcanal and Bougainville. We never jumped in combat. The jungles of the Pacific were not the

right place to jump from an airplane.

After forming the 5th Marine Division back in California, we trained at Camp Tarawa, Hawaii for the invasion of Iwo Jima. I was in the Heavy Weapons Co. 28th Regiment. I was aboard a ship for 45 days as the convoy gathered for the assault on Iwo. I went in on the eighth wave on Feb. 19, 1945. Our landing craft held 20 Marines and a half track. Each man carried a weapon, ammunition and two canteens. I hid a camera in a hollow canteen and took many pictures during the invasion and my 36 days on the island.

The most memorable thing about the landing was the explosions. The Navy and Air Force shelled the island for three days before we arrived and continued while we went in. Our shells and those the Japanese were dropping on us almost drove you deaf. We crawled in the tracks the half track made in the black sand. The first two days we only made it a few hundred yards from the beach. There we fired on Mount Suribachi with our 75mm gun. While going back to the beach for ammo, I found 20 wounded Marines under heavy fire. I got the Bronze Star for leading their evacuation. We were ordered not to fire at all the first night in order to conceal our position. It was tough because we saw the enemy taking packs off dead Marines and we couldn't do a thing about it.

Seventy-five percent of my outfit was killed or wounded on Iwo. My friend was killed when he took over a flame thrower from another guy. Strapping one of those things on was a damn death

Corporal Ralph Schmidt flashes the victory sign while posing with an enemy rifle on Iwo Jima.

sentence. I came close more than a few times. Once while I was firing a 50-caliber my buddy said he would take over. I just switched places with him when he got hit. The second night a mortar landed on the edge my foxhole. It didn't explode! I waited a few minutes, grabbed it by a fin and threw it as far as I could. Another night I was in a shallow foxhole covered by a tarp. When the shelling started we laid low with our faces in our helmets. When the shelling stopped we had 13 holes in our tarp and nobody got hit. I still remember shells falling close enough to spray sand down my neck.

I was at the base of Surabachi when guys from my outfit raised the flag. You wouldn't believe the cheering when that first flag appeared. Rosenthal gave everyone in our outfit a copy of his famous photo of the second flag raising.

The cave entrances were shelled or hit with flame throwers, but some involved a room-by-room search. Sometimes we were underground for hours. We sent some enemy prisoners into caves to convince others to surrender, but it didn't work. I was surprised the ones in the caves let them come back out.

Every Marine had to go on burial duty. We buried the Japanese with bulldozers, sometimes hundreds to a grave. Our Marines were buried in a huge cemetery, where every body was identified by a cross, a name and a dog tag. They started the cemetery in the form of a cross, but there were so many dead they had to fill in the corner spaces. We trained for the invasion of Japan after Iwo Jima, however, the bomb was dropped and I went as part of the occupation.

During the war, Ralph's brother encouraged him to write to a girl in Chicago. They met during furloughs and were married after the war. Ralph and Joan Schmidt raised six children in the village of Belgium. The birth of twins in 1951 put him over a dependent limit that kept him from being sent to Korea.

Steven Schmidt As told to Vicki Schanen

Naval Radioman

Steve Schmidt had been working in retail and was offered a promotion to management after his high school graduation, but he didn't think that's what he wanted to do as a career. He joined the service because it would give him four years to sort things out, learn a trade and ultimately decide what he wanted to do for a career.

My mother and father weren't too pleased when I came home with the announcement that I was joining the Navy during my senior year of high school. At the time, they had the 120-day delay program where you could actually join the Naval Reserves for that time period before graduation. I joined in January 1968, graduated from Custer High School, and then went on active duty in April. I picked the Navy because I had two older cousins that had joined ahead of me. I always had a great deal of respect for them and they influenced my decision.

I went to the Naval Recruiter and filled out my "dream sheet," which are the orders you think you'd like. I originally was going to ask for San Diego but my recruiter suggested that if I put in for Great Lakes I'd only be 90 miles from home, which I did. However, when I went to pick up my orders, they said San Diego. I argued with the man for awhile about there being some mistake in my orders, but there was no mistake. It wasn't really a disappointment, but it was kind of a shock. I did my basic at Camp Nimitz and then I went to Radioman "A" School at N.T.C. San Diego.

I originally wanted to get into lithography, but I didn't get it because the chances of going aboard ship were high and the billets for lithography were limited aboard ship. I ended up becoming a radioman and trained in voice communications, teletype communications and maintenance of transmitters and receivers.

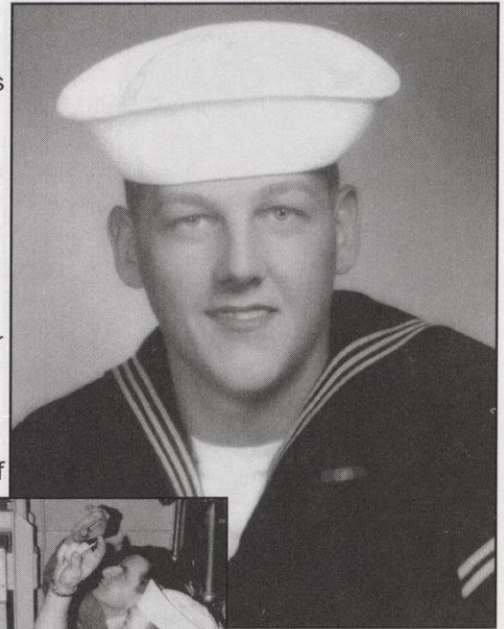
When we finished "A" School in January 1969, about 80 percent of the guys got orders to ships "West Pac" because Vietnam was going on and we were stationed on the West Coast. I assumed I would be going too, however, when they announced my name I was to report to the USS Little Rock, which was a light-guided missile cruiser and part of the 6th fleet in the Mediterranean. That was kind of nice and unexpected.

I was flown into Rota, Spain and then they shuttled me to Naples, Italy where I reported to personnel. They said, "Why were you sent here?" I told them that I had been told that the Little Rock would be coming into Naples. They said, "The Little Rock is carrying the admiral of the 6th Fleet and he doesn't come to Naples." They looked up the ship's itinerary and they saw that the ship was going to be in Rota, Spain, so I had to fly back and wait for the ship. I had about three weeks with no duty. The Spanish people who cleaned our barracks taught me how to play foosball, which I had never seen until that point.

The first 20 months of my tour was done in the Mediterranean. We were the 6th Fleet's Flag Ship. I reported aboard as "ship's company," but while the admiral was aboard I was given a Temporary Assignment of Duty and remained attached to him and his staff. A lot of the jobs aboard ship were daytime jobs, but as radioman we stood watches around the clock. Our division was always on duty. We had eve-day-mid watches, then we'd have 32 hours off. We had gangway liberty, which meant that we could go ashore any time we weren't on watch. The guys who had regular day hours could only go after 4:30 p.m.

The admiral didn't like to spend a whole lot of time at sea - we'd go out for maybe 5 to 10 days at a time - so that was a benefit to us. A lot of what we did was public relations; we kept in touch with the NATO countries. I do remember the admiral was good friends with Prince Ranier and Princess Grace, so when we went to Monaco he would spend time with them and host a dinner on board. We pulled into Monaco quite a few times. I'm sure there were other dignitaries in other ports that we were not aware of.

Because of what we did and where we were stationed at that time, I could safely say that I had been to more cities in Italy than I had been in Wisconsin. Our home port was Gaeta, Italy, which was half way between Rome and Naples. It was quite a tour.



This photo of Grafton's Steve Schmidt was taken in San Diego in 1968. (right) Here is Steve in the foreground with his buddy Cliff Wilson in the back aboard the USS Little Rock, 1970.

Herman Scholz As told to Vicki Schanen

Naval Trademan (Training Device Man)

Before Herman Scholz was drafted into the Navy, he worked for Harneschfeger Homes in Port Washington. He worked in the department that loaded boxcars for shipment, and among the shipments he packed were SeaBee barracks.

I got my notice for the physical for the draft on a Tuesday and went by bus from Sheboygan down to Milwaukee for our pre-induction physical. When we got back to Sheboygan there was the Navy recruiter waiting for us to hand out his literature. When I returned home that evening, I just threw it on the kitchen table and my dad picked it up. He read it and said, "You better get in the Navy before the Army gets you. Foxholes aren't much fun."



Grafton's Herman Scholz served with the U.S. Navy from 1951 until 1955 as part of the Korean Crisis. The stripes on his uniform were green, which signified "airman."

I also had a brother who was in the Navy during the 1940s, so that Friday I decided to enlist in the Navy. When my dad brought the mail home from the post office that night, there was my notice from the Army. I beat them out by a few hours!

I entered the Navy as an Airman Recruit. After finishing basic training at Great Lakes I was flown to Jacksonville, Fla., for Airman "P" School where we learned about the different rates in the Navy Air Corp. I got the rate of Trademan, which is the operation and instruction of training devices. I really wanted that rate because it was 80 percent shore duty. If you got sea duty, it was aboard a heavy cruiser, battle wagon or aircraft carrier - the heavy stuff - which didn't go to the bottom too often.

I then went to "A" school in Memphis, Tenn., which was a 16-week course that let us study everything in our rate. We started out with physics and math; we were told that we got a college year of both in one week. We studied it eight hours a day. We also studied electricity and electronics. Once we finished that, we would go on to our duty station.

But I never wound up getting on an airbase or carrier or anything like that. I was attached to the Naval Station in San Diego, Calif. I was there for more than three years. I was attached to the First Division, which was officers and so on. We had to type up lesson plans for them.

Eventually I got into the Maintenance Division, which was where we maintained the training equipment that we did have around there, which really wasn't much. We had a Mark 3 Gunnery Trainer. It had a film that was projected and then we had a mount where a guy would shoot at it. The equipment had an infrared scorer which would tell the gunner how many hits he had. You couldn't see it, but it was part of the film.

We had to maintain that once or twice a week and the rest of the time we goofed off. We had a lot of free time - we had nothing else to do. We played cards. We also built hi-fi stereos - we'd get a chit (form) from our commander and go down to the salvage yard and dig out what we wanted. My hi-fi worked halfways decent until I got back home and was able to throw it out and make something else. I continued to build things after I came home - I built an FM tuner and had an amplifier, too.

When I was in the building where the Gunnery Trainer was, there was nothing to do - it was boring as heck. So there was one guy in our group from back East who was going to college at night. He wanted to swap jobs with me so he would have time to study. He was in charge of the Mail P.O., the training aids library and the officers' library where they had all our coursebooks. He was also in charge of the coffee mess for the officers that were attached to our school and that were attending our classes. I swapped jobs with him and had those responsibilities for the last six months of my duty.

Before I got out I got the "shipping-over talk" where they try to get you to reenlist. It didn't work on me. By the time I got that talk, I was married and had two kids. I had bought my future wife her engagement ring right at the time I had gotten my draft notice. I had served nine months in the Navy before I came home and got married and then we had two children right away.

I have one Navy buddy that I still keep in touch with from that time. He's in Bakersfield, Calif. I just talked to him last week. Come Christmas time, our school would shut down down for two weeks. I would end up at his place for 12 days. It was pretty nice. All we had to do was get a pass from our C.O. saying that we were legal. Otherwise we would have been considered AWOL.

Dr. Robert Schuknecht, DVM

Army Veterinarian

For 49 years animal owners in the Saukville area have brought their pets to be cared for by Dr. Schuknecht. But before he started his own private practice, Dr. Schuknecht served two tours of duty in the Army.

I was part of the ROTC Program as an undergraduate at UW-Madison. While I was doing undergraduate work at Iowa State, I was also in the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), which paid and fed us. World War II was going on, and they did need veterinarians. But when the war ended, they only kept about 10 from our class and discharged the rest of us.

After I graduated, I had a couple of jobs for the state and federal government. I took part in the UNRRA program, which was a United Nations program that bought horses in the United States and shipped them to Europe. I made six trips to Europe after the war and three trips to Gdansk, Poland, which was very much destroyed. I also made two trips to Calamata, Greece, which was also destroyed. I made one trip to Trieste, a free port on the Adriatic Sea that was also damaged, with horses for Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia was blown to bits. The Germans blew it up, then the Russians came through and blew it up again.

When the Korean War broke out, I volunteered for the Army. It wasn't that the Army really turned me on, but I was between jobs and I wanted to work with farm animals. I was ordered to Ft. Reno, Okla., in January 1952. I was a Captain, which wasn't so bad because I wasn't quite on the bottom of the list anymore.

Ft. Reno was a remount station and it had 10,000 acres with huge feed lots. The Army would go around the auctions and buy up horses. They'd come in, and we'd check them over, vaccinate them, lance any abscesses - provide whatever treatment was necessary.

Because everything had become mechanized, the military wasn't really using horses anymore. The horses in our care were being prepared for shipment to the Turkish army. The theory was that the Turkish army would tie up the Russians in the west instead of allowing them to fully concentrate on what was happening in Korea. We had a colonel who was a bit of a cynic about what actually happened to the horses, but what happened to them was really up to the Turks.

There were two classifications of horses: cavalry (less than 1,000 pounds) and field artillery (about 1,200 pounds). After about three months, which allowed the horses to get through any sickness, we'd load them into boxcars at Ft. Reno and take them down to New Orleans. It was about a day-long trip and every time the train stopped, we'd run out to look in the boxcars for any knocked down horses. We had to get them up or they ran the risk of being trampled. It always felt like the Texas Pacific Railroad was trying to set new world speed records. We also slept in a boxcar and they gave us meal tickets and a few K rations. Sometimes when we'd try to use those meal tickets in the cities, they'd look at us as if we were trying to use foreign currency.

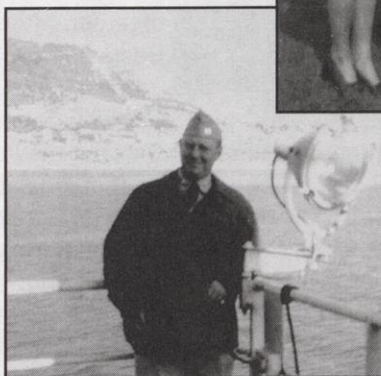
We traveled on the SS Columbia Heights, which wasn't a government ship but part of the Isbrandtsen Line. The horses were kept on deck and in the holds where stalls had been built. Usually we had between 800 and 900 horses. They traveled pretty well, but if we lost a horse, we'd throw it overboard to the sharks.

I made eight trips total to Istanbul and Iskenderun. They must've cleaned house on my first one because I lost quite a few horses. The last trip we made it without losing a single one and they tied a broom up on the mast to signify a "clean sweep." We once had a colt born aboard ship and we had to isolate the colt and the mare, but they both did fine. We also lost a soldier who died of heart trouble and we had to make arrangements to drop him off at Gibraltar.

After we left New Orleans, it was about a 17-18 day trip to Turkey. It took us about 12 days to cross the Atlantic and six to seven to go through the Mediterranean. Once our captain took us around Sicily. We'd either sail into Istanbul or Iskenderun once we arrived. Istanbul was quite cosmopolitan, and I did some traveling in southwestern Turkey. It is a Muslim country and an interesting place to visit, though I never went back after I was discharged in 1954. Later that year, I established my own practice in Saukville and have been working as a veterinarian ever since.



Above: The future Dr. Schuknecht poses with his sister Elnor and his mother. Left: Captain Schuknecht topside as his ship passes through the Straits of Gibraltar, 1953.



Pauline Shappell

As told to Vicki Schanen

Captain in the Air Force

A native of Southamptton, Massachusetts, Pauline first left home when she went off to college at Oral Roberts University. She graduated with a degree in biology and taught for about six months before she joined the Air Force in 1984. Two of her brothers are currently serving in the Air Force, and Pauline served until 1996.

With a degree in biology, all it really qualifies you to do is to go on for a master's or go on to medical school. I was on the waiting list for Oklahoma College of Osteopathic Medicine and realized that I could wait for a really long time. I was doing some temporary office work and I decided that the one place where I could use my degree was in the Air Force as an officer.



Air Force Captain Pauline Shappell, 1993.

When I went into the recruiter, I wanted to fly. I did have a private pilot's license. I had good eyesight. I was neat and polished - I was wearing a nice linen skirt and ruffled blouse. My recruiter looked at me and said, "You don't look like a pilot, you look like an aircraft maintenance officer." I thought, "What, do I have grease under my fingernails?" They needed to put women in non-conventional fields.

After I finished my training, I worked in flight prep for the F-111 at McClellan AFB in Sacramento, Calif.: The last stop out of the depot inspection process. My job was to supervise, to know how things should be and to keep things safe. We also had a "sell date," which was a deadline when we had to "sell" the aircraft back to the owning base. It would get a little tight sometimes.

I met my husband, Bob, when I arrived at McClellan, and we got married in April 1987. One week after we were married, he left for Korea. At that time, I had moved over to Avionics Communication. The first year that we were married, we spent a total of eight weeks together. After he finished his remote assignment, he was assigned to Beale AFB in Yuba County, Calif., in 1988.

Because Bob outranked me, he would get an assignment and then they would try to find a slot for me at that base. Unfortunately, there weren't any slots open in maintenance, so they put me in supply for a year. I absolutely hated that job. We moved in 1988 and stayed until 1992. I had a number of jobs at Beale.

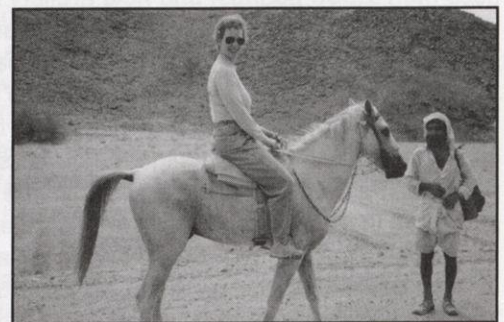
After the year in supply, I spent a year on the Deputy Commander of Maintenance staff. I then became the maintenance supervisor for the Avionics Squadron and later the Field Maintenance Squadron. At this base, we had the SR-71, the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft, the KC135 Tanker and the T-39 trainer.

I spent an 11-week rotation in Saudi Arabia with the U-2 during Desert Storm. Our last sorties were part of Operation Southern Comfort. Saddam Hussein was doing gas attacks on the Kurds at the time. I personally launched out the last combat-coded sortie for the U-2. I had some fun with it. I said, "Thank you for flying Fantasy Airlines, prior to takeoff, please ensure all tables and seat backs are in the upright and locked position" ... and then I said a few more things. The pilot was laughing when he took off.

When I was in public in Saudi Arabia, I did wear an abaya and a long scarf over my hair. I didn't have to cover my lower face; the blue eyes were dead giveaway that I was not a Saudi woman. I couldn't drive on public roads, but I could drive on base; even then the Saudi guards would giggle. They thought it was funny to see a woman driving.

In 1992, Bob received an assignment to Edwards AFB in the B-2 Stealth Bomber Test Program. My job there involved testing a new missile for the B-52 and the conversion of the B-1 from nuclear to conventional weapons. At one time, between Bob and I, we had the entire bomber testing program of the Air Force.

My last assignment was at Osan Airbase, Korea, where I was the Squadron Logistics officer for the 5th Reconnaissance Squadron. I was responsible for the maintenance, supply, ground equipment and avionics for the U-2 aircraft. This was by far my best assignment in the Air Force. I left the Air Force in September 1996 and obtained a Bachelor of Nursing Degree. I currently teach nursing at Milwaukee Area Technical College.



Pauline in Saudi Arabia, June 1991. Pauline nurtured a passion for horses while stationed in California and still owns them today.

Robert Shappell

As told to Vicki Schanen

Started at the Air Force Academy and retired as a Colonel

Cedarburg resident Bob Shappell grew up on a Pennsylvania Dutch farm with "a little bit of everything." His father was a WWII Army veteran and earned the Silver Star while serving in the First Cavalry Division. His older sister also served in the Marines.

I grew up with an airplane infatuation, particularly those from World War II. I don't really know why. My mom and dad bought me a lot of books about airplanes and I loved watching the movies. Somewhere along the way I decided I wanted to go to the Air Force Academy. By some wonderful stroke of luck, I received an appointment.

I was in the Class of 1975. When we initially went there, we all had draft numbers. At the end of my sophomore year, the draft ended and a large number of cadets left the Academy before our junior-year service commitment. We only had 750 graduates after starting with more than 1,500. It was the lowest graduation rate of any Academy class. When I graduated, I had more than 190 credits, both in military training and my history major. It was an amazing, amazing education.

Largely because of a summer training experience I was able to have at Elmendorf Air Force Base at Anchorage, Alaska while at the Air Force Academy (and the fact that I couldn't be a pilot due to my marginal color vision), I decided to request and received aircraft maintenance and I went for additional training.

I put in for an assignment close to home, which was Dover Air Force Base in Delaware with the C-5 airplane. It was fairly new at the time and the 36 that we had at Dover filled up the entire base. I was a brand-new Second Lieutenant and I had 400 people working for me! I then was transferred to the Avionics Maintenance Squadron for about a year and a half learning about communications, navigation and things that boggled my mind: Electricity and sparks.

I was then sent to Squadron Officer's School and out of the 700 or 800 people, I graduated second in the class. It was really a highlight in my career.

After I finished it, I went back to Elmendorf for an "overseas" tour. I was very excited about it. I did things I would have never done there - I went hunting and got a Dall sheep and did volunteer work with the Special Olympics. I did a lot of running, too. I also went to Korea to participate in an exercise called Team Spirit. It was the first time Alaskan-based airplanes had ever gone to anything like it.

I was then assigned to Tactical Air Command at Langley Air Force Base. I did career management. I would call officers and talk to them about careers and move them around. I got to meet and talk to thousands of maintenance officers. I would run into them for the next 15 years I spent in the Air Force.

During the mid-1980s, my focus was on work with battle damage repair, first with the Combat Logistics Support Squadron at McClellan AFB in California. I was then moved into A-10 maintenance at the depot. My job was to make it easier for the maintenance folks to repair airplanes and I did a lot of traveling.

I was told when I went into maintenance that I would go overseas three times during a 20-year career: One long tour (three years), one short tour (one year) and then probably another. I had my Alaskan long tour. For my short tour with the A-10, I was assigned to Suwon, Korea, home of the closest American airplanes to North Korea.

Sometimes, you never get quite what you ask for. I loved fighters - the roar of the engines, being under the F-4 and having your body shake - and I was selected for SAC at Beale AFB to work on reconnaissance. I was really disappointed. I wanted to be a squadron commander. The rationale for sending me there was that SAC wanted to use the same maintenance policies that the Tactical Air Command did. The following year I became the flight line commander for the KC-135 maintenance squadron. I finally had my own squadron! We had the only airplanes that could refuel the SR-71 because of its fuel type and the security involved, so we were involved in Desert Shield/Storm.

As we got closer to the war really starting, the wing commander picked me to go. About 140 maintenance people came with me to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. We ended up in an unusual group made up of 30 active duty airplanes from 10 different bases and people from 11 different bases. We were a very thrown-together group and we knew something was going to happen. Desert Storm started that night.

After Bob returned to Beale AFB, he went on to be a squadron commander for the U-2 and B-2 programs. He ultimately served as a squadron commander for a total of seven consecutive years before becoming the Logistics Group Commander at Moody AFB in Georgia. He was ultimately made a full colonel in 1997. His last assignment brought him to Marquette University, as the school's ROTC Commander. He retired on September 1, 2001.



Bob served with the United States Air Force from 1975 until 2001.

Gene Schwalbe

As interviewed by his granddaughter, Sheri Schwalbe

Air Force Radar Specialist

As one of four children, Eugene "Gene" Frederick Schwalbe was born to Amanda and Rueben Schwalbe on March 9, 1934, in the town of Eaton, near Collins, Wis. He graduated from Lincoln High School in 1951 and enlisted in the Air Force in September of 1952.

The summer after I graduated from high school, I worked at a hardware store and on the side, I did roofing and siding. That fall I decided to work construction full-time doing concrete and masonry work. At that time a lot of men were getting drafted into the Army so I decided to enlist first and I chose the Air Force.

I went with two of my buddies from high school to Milwaukee to enlist. One of the guys was sent home right away and the other guy, Bill Rieck, who was a close friend of mine, was being told to lie down and rest to try and get his blood pressure back up. Anyway, everything turned out and Bill and I enlisted together.



Gene was fortunate enough to get stationed close to home - at Truax Field in Madison.

Basic training began immediately, and it took place from Sept. 23rd through Dec. 23rd. One guy who came from somewhere out West brought his horse saddle which was pretty amusing! We were sent to Texas by train for Basic Training. I was pretty happy to have arrived in Texas at the end of September because of the heat. The thing I remember about Texas was the desert-like conditions. Basic training in the Air Force wasn't really "gung ho," like some of the other branches. There was a lot of physical training in the beginning and they taught us how to march, we also attended a lot of classes. We got to shoot a rifle one day in Basic Training.

I was headed to a school at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Miss. At Keesler we attended six hours of schooling per day. Keesler was a nice base in a pretty neat town located on the ocean. Here, we marched to school everyday at 6:00 a.m. sharp. We would get up at around 4:00 a.m., wash up, have breakfast and then get dressed to go to training. Although the base was nice, they didn't have many airplanes, only a few for training.

After leaving Keesler Air Force Base, I was given my first assignment - I was going to go to Control Tower Operator School. Here I was also going to be pulling "KP," kitchen police, washing pots and pans, where your day starts at 3:30 a.m. and goes until 7:00 p.m.

During my time at Laekland, a friend of mine from my church happened to walk by and he was a Sergeant. We talked and he asked me where I wanted to go when I left Laekland. I told him close to home or Germany. He told me he would see what he could do and when my orders came they were for Madison, WI as a Radar Specialist and I thought "you can't be any closer to home than that!"

Truax was an Air Force base and a civilian base. The civilians controlled air traffic and the military controlled the radar. In the radar units, two guys usually worked together, one guy would do the first part of the approach and the second guy would do the last part of the approach, the final landing. We would work 4 twelve-hour shifts, noon until midnight, two days and then midnight until noon, for two days. Then we got two and half days off. I was sent back down to Control Tower Operator School at Laekland Air Force Base for another 16 weeks of training. The schooling was about the same as before, but you got more used to operating the radar machines. My training paid off the day I saved a civilian piper cub. The civilians in the control tower called me one day and said, "Do you have an airplane on such and such an area," and I told them we did not. I then realized that there was a civilian who was lost in the rain storm. So, I turned the scopes on and told him which direction he needed to head to get back to the base. Eventually I was able to turn him in the right direction and pretty soon he came out of the clouds pretty low and landed. He was sweating because he didn't know if he was going to make it or not!

Upon completing his time in service, Gene Schwalbe was awarded a Good Conduct and National Service medal. Following his military service, Gene trained as a chef at Madison Technical College, a profession of which he was always proud. While in Madison, he met his wife, Helen and the two settled and raised their nine kids in Cedarburg, Wis. Gene was Chef-Manager of the cafeteria at Eaton-Cutler Hammer for thirty years. He was a business owner and a member of the Cedarburg Chamber of Commerce, as well as a dedicated member of the Cedarburg Lion's Club for more than 30 years.

Gene passed away on April 17, 2005.

William Siebert

Experienced the Koje-do Rioting in Korea

There was no doubt in Bill Siebert's mind about what he would do after graduating from high school in Oconto: He would join the military. He was one of three cousins who served during the Korean War, one of whom was captured as a POW in Korea. Thankfully, all three cousins eventually came home safely.

I wasn't drafted, I enlisted. We were the children who came up during World War II and we felt we owed this country something. I remember World War II very well because so many guys from Oconto were killed. As kids, we would collect milkweeds for making life preservers. We would always collect tin cans with farm girls because their dads received larger allotments of gas and we could drive around in their cars.

When we joined we were recruits, not even privates. I had an older cousin who had served in World War II. He told me that I should take a typing class so I could get a decent job in the military. When I enlisted, the Korean conflict hadn't started. We were more worried about China taking Formosa and how shaky things were in Europe.

I was assigned to the Headquarters Detachment of the 77th Ordnance Depot on Guam. I was made a classified messenger and carried de-classified messages twice a day. I would also occasionally distribute the mail. I had it pretty good - an 18-year-old private with his own jeep, no KP and no guard duty.

I was later transferred to the 96th Quartermaster Battalion, which turned out to be an intelligence unit and our battalion had all of 13 members in it. I would write up reports based on our intelligence and would also accompany our colonel to the Officers' Club. One time he said, "Here's the latest communicaid from our Emperor in Tokyo..." and he meant MacArthur.

After a 30-day leave, I was transferred to the Pentagon's Career Record Analyst Branch (CRAB). Our job was to review officers' records to see who should get promoted. But I still wanted to get overseas. The Korean War started right after I got to the Pentagon. I saw our Sergeant Major and told him that I wanted to go overseas, that I wanted to be with the Second Division. He told me I wasn't eligible, but my roommate went out on the first draft and came home a month later with both his legs cut off at the knees. I ended up putting in for school and graduated from Armored School. I was still asking for Korea, but I got transferred to Ft. Monmouth, N.J. I remember I was sitting in our barracks when two MPs came and got me - I thought, what did I do? - but they took me to this building that said "Atomic" on it in red letters. They wanted me to work for them, but I said I didn't think I was qualified. Boy was my name mud after that!

I still kept trying to get to Korea. It's hard to explain - I knew things were bad over there, but it was my family, a brotherhood. I was ready to go and fight with my "brothers" over there. Finally in Fall 1951 I made the mistake of saying that I wanted to be where the "real" Army was instead of being in the United States. Usually it takes about three days to get transferred, but I was gone in eight hours.

I ended up on duty at Prison Camp No. 1 on Koje-do Island. On the first day, I remember hearing someone say, "They're doing it again!" When they'd empty the prisoners' night soil [waste], they'd find body parts because they were torturing their own people. The Korean Communists did three kinds of torture: they'd cut you up; do Chinese water torture where they would stick a hose in your mouth and when the water stopped up, they'd jump on your stomach; or they'd run you by your testicles up a flagpole. They were fanatical and barbaric. They'd make spears out of the insoles of their combat boots and Molotov cocktails out of the kerosene we'd give them for their stoves.

At the time, the United States really didn't understand how to run a POW camp. They had too many POWs in the compounds, somewhere between 170,000 and 190,000 people total. We had a lot of problems. The Koje-do riot was planned. We were assisted by the 27th Wolfhound Regiment and the 702nd Tank Battalion - almost 750 U.S. soldiers were involved in the riot. We held off as long as we could before we started shooting. After about three hours, 69 POWs had been killed and 142 had been injured. We lost one American soldier.

Bill passed away on September 2, 2004.



Grafton resident Bill Siebert was one of the "yanks" who stopped the prison riot at Koje-do Island in 1952.

Catherine "Kitty" Kiefer Spain As told to Vicki Schanen

Corpsman in the Navy during World War II

Kitty says that her childhood was good, but poor, like most families had during the Depression. She attending Messmer High School for two years and then spent an additional two years in the St. Joseph Convent to finish her education. She had plans to become a nun, but after her father passed away, she returned home to help support her mother and two younger brothers. She was working as a long-distance supervisor at the telephone company in 1943.

My job was a top-priority job during the war, which meant that you couldn't be released from your job, period. I had decided I wanted to join the service. I wanted to help my country. I went down to the recruiting office and she said she couldn't accept my application. My supervisors at Wisconsin Bell told me they couldn't release me.



(above) Kitty (front right) and her friends celebrating a birthday at The Little Club at the U.S. Grant Hotel in San Diego. (left) Kitty in 1944. She would serve from 1944 until 1946.



They ended up taking me to Mr. O'Day, the vice president of the company. This was after V-E Day and he said to me, "I'll tell you, Catherine. With the war going like it is, it will be over in a short time and then you could enlist." We had a nice long conversation and he said he'd give me his word: If the war continued for 90 days, he'd release me and he'd bridge my service with the telephone company. We shook hands on it. The war escalated in the South Pacific, he released me and I joined the Navy.

I made the provision so that most of my pay would be sent home to my mother. I had a \$50 allotment for myself, which seemed like a lot, but it really wasn't. My mother was very unhappy with my decision and she told me to stay close to home.

There was a whole contingency of women from all over Wisconsin, and we boarded a troop train. I remember crossing the Ohio River in Sandusky, Ohio and thinking, "What am I doing?" It was my first time that far away from home. We were sent to Hunter College in the Bronx for six weeks of training, which was all about the Navy. They asked us what we wanted to do and I told them I wanted

to be a corpsman, so they sent me to Bethesda Naval Hospital for training. It was very basic - mostly school - and they did not allow us to work on the wards.

From there, they had places posted different places where you could ask to be transferred to from Bethesda. The first one was Great Lakes and the second was San Diego, which was what I requested even though my mother wanted me to be stationed closed to home. I had to grow up. I wanted to see California. I did tell my mother what I did, too. She said, "If you're going to be happy, fine." I went to the naval hospital.

I worked in Central Supply and the Blood Bank. The young recruits would come in and give blood, and they'd pass out left and right. I met my future husband, Bill, when I was working in Central Supply. He was a guard at the brig. He teased me to the point where I didn't like him but he grew on me. One day though, he did ask me for a date. I said, "Where do you want to go?" He took me to Balboa Park, which was connected to the hospital to see a movie, "The Fight of the Marines." It was free so he didn't have to pay for the date.

The nurses would draw the blood and we'd take it for processing. We also made sure they got juice and cookies. In Central Supply, I sterilized the equipment and labeled it so it could go back and be used. We would re-sharpen the needles so they could be used again. We had huge sterilizers, tube-like things. We had some sailors that helped us pull things out. Some weekends I would work night duty in Central Supply. On those shifts, I would dispense things, but it was never really that busy. Usually we would hand out surgical things.

V-J Day was incredible. The city went wild; there were so many people you couldn't move. After V-J day, though, if we had enough points, we could get out of the service. I had enough points, so that's what I did. By this point, Bill had asked me to marry me, too. I had to go to Great Lakes to be mustered out. I went home and spent Christmas with my mother. Wisconsin Bell transferred my records to Southern Bell and I became a regular telephone operator in San Diego until Bill finished out his time and was discharged.

Our experience was interesting because young people today can only read about what happened during the war. We lived it, we did it. It was a quite an experience for us.

William A. Spain

As remembered by his wife, Kitty Spain
and told to Vicki Schanen

Wounded in the Battle of Bouganville

Kitty and Bill's courtship began with a rocky start at the Naval Hospital in San Diego. He delighted in teasing her, and it wasn't until she accepted his offer of a date that things began to change. Here is Bill's story, remembered by his wife, Kitty.

After his parents divorced when Bill was 11, he went to live with his aunt and cousins in Richmond, Va. When the war came along, Bill and his cousin went to Washington, D.C., and enlisted in the Marine Corps. Bill and his cousin both felt a real need to serve our country.

They were sent together to Parris Island, S.C. He remembered basic training as very, very tough. From there they shipped out via troop train to San Francisco. Troop trains were very basic forms of transportation and it took quite a long time to get from coast to coast.

They were scared to death when they shipped out of San Francisco in 1942 and entered the Pacific in September 1942. Before they left, they all went out and drank gin. Bill told me that as they crossed under the Bay Bridge in San Francisco, they were so frightened that they were all throwing up.

Bill was wounded in the Battle of Bouganville in the Solomon Islands. It's a battle that's not spoken of in many history books. My brother is a World War II buff, and he was so happy that he finally found a book about it. It was a very bitter battle for the American boys; there were lives lost. Bill had only been on the island for 18 days before he was injured, all of which he spent on the front line. A Japanese artillery shell exploded behind his gun. It knocked him out of the fight but didn't injure anyone else in his gun crew. Bill's injury was in his right upper leg.

Bill walked to an aid station for treatment and was then sent to a hospital in the islands before he was shipped to San Francisco. From there he was sent to the San Diego Naval Hospital for further recuperation.

After he was considered healed, he was put on patient guard duty at the Naval Hospital. He was a guard at the brig and the main gate at the hospital. He worked a regular day and they would rotate "port and starboard" while on guard duty even though they were on land and not on a ship.

He was a typical Marine. He went out, he worked, he made rank. The fellows and girls at the hospital would often hang out in Balboa Park, which was right on the base underneath a bridge.

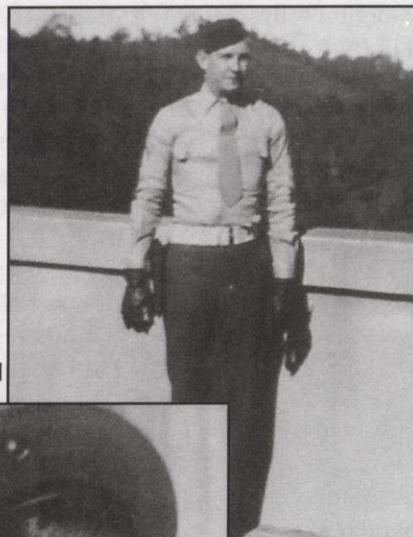
We began dating in 1945 when I worked above him in the brig. He was a patient guard and I worked two floors above where he worked. We had a lot of entertainers who came to the hospital as well. They'd bring patients into the courtyard for the entertainment - Bob Hope came quite frequently. And because Bill was a patient guard, he would escort the patients out to the entertainment. Bill always had to carry a gun though - some of the patients were really hardened criminals. He had to protect himself in case something happened.

Bill also befriended Rosie the Cook, a heavysset black lady. He was good that way, at making friends. Rosie loved my husband. She'd say, "Bill, you come in after you're done. I'll fix you something to eat." She'd give him fried chicken and cake .. [it] probably came from the officers. She was very good to the boys, just a motherly type of a woman. Many of times, he'd call me from my barracks and I'd go down and eat with him!

He still had some residual problems with his leg because he had shrapnel and it would act up once in awhile. He had also contracted filariasis, which got into his wounds while in the islands. Filariasis is a parasitic infection that can also cause sterility, among other problems. Because of these two medical issues, Bill was able to receive disability and he had to be checked every so many years after he had returned home.

Bill was discharged on April 8, 1946 and we were married on April 11, 1946. Bill didn't want to live back at home in Virginia, so we went back to Wisconsin. It was hard to find a job back then - everybody was coming home at the same time. Bill found a job at the old Schuester's as a cook, and a few jobs after that he became a millwright and mechanic at Pawling and Harnischfeger for nearly 20 years.

Bill passed away on April 27, 1987.



(above) Bill standing guard in 1944 or 1945 at the U.S. Naval Hospital in San Diego, Calif. (left) Bill in 1942. He served with the Marine Corps from April 8, 1942 until April 8, 1946.

Naval Interior Communications

Menominee, Mich. native Paul Sorensen had just gotten married in 1963 and was working for Wisconsin Bell in Milwaukee when he and his new bride received a most unwelcome wedding gift: Paul's draft notice.

There was a draft back then, and when you reached 22 or 23, you knew you were going to get drafted. When I received my draft notice, I knew I had to do something. We knew my draft notice would be coming and that there was no draft deferment if you were married. You could get one if you had children, but we did not.

I started making some phone calls. I really wasn't looking forward to being drafted. They had a six-month program for the Army. You could go for six months and then spend 5 1/2 years in the Reserves, but you had to go right away. The Air Force's only program was four years of active duty and I think the Coast Guard was about the same. But you couldn't get into the Coast Guard because there was a waiting list and I didn't have time to wait.

The Navy, however, had a program that required two years of active duty, but you didn't have to go for 15 months. All total, it was a six-year commitment including active and inactive time. I thought this program would give me time to get adjusted to married life and spend time with my wife. I ended up joining the Naval Reserve. I started attending meetings once a week as part of the active reserves. Our meetings were held at Jones Island, and the building is still there.

Every year, the Reserves had to do two weeks of active duty. The Navy called them "cruises." The first one was our basic training, and it was held at Great Lakes. I did that during summer 1962. I took the North Shore down there. The Reserve Center had given us our service records - which we were supposed to guard with our life - and there was a guy who left his service record on the train. He was in trouble... [Paul laughs]

It was a tough two weeks for everyone, but exceptionally tough on him. It was very intense training for two weeks: We did firefighting, went in the gas chamber and all the standard stuff. However, I do remember the day we were supposed to do the obstacle course, it rained so we didn't do it.

Before I was supposed to go on active duty, Wisconsin Bell offered to send me to additional schooling. I realized I would be up for active duty before I was finished with this school. Plus, my wife was expecting a baby by this point. I went into the commanding officer to ask for a longer deferment. I received a response that said that they really didn't care that my wife was pregnant, but they were interested in the school I was attending. The Naval Reserves had just instituted a new policy where a Reserve could apply for A School, the Navy's first stage of technical training. They suggested that I apply for Interior Communications A School, which was an 18-week school and they wanted me to complete the telephone company's school as well.

The equipment that we maintained was a little different than what I worked with in my civilian life. In the Navy we used sound-powered phones and maintained the gyrocompass and the ship's speedometer, which was a six-foot sword that went through the bottom of the ship. We had equipment in every space of the ship, so we got to see all the areas.

I had to report to Newport, R.I. when it was time for active duty in 1963. When I arrived, my ship wasn't there. It was on a cruise, so I was assigned to a destroyer tender. The "USS" in a destroyer's name stands for "Underway Saturday and Sunday." Destroyers are always at sea. Tenders always aground in coffee grounds. I worked in the supply department - I had no idea what I was doing - until I received my assignment and met the USS Fred T. Barry in San Juan, Puerto Rico. After we returned to Newport, we prepared for our Mediterranean cruise, which took us to Italy, Greece, Cyprus and on through the Suez Canal.

We worked in the shop with the gyrocompass. We had nice watches on the ship - there always had to be someone with the gyrocompass, which was an important and somewhat sensitive instrument. Because of this equipment, our shop was one of the few places on the ship that was air conditioned.

After we returned from our cruise, we made the decision to move my wife and our two children to Newport. It was quite an experience. Both of our children were still in diapers. But, we rented a trailer and made the move from Menominee to Newport. Right after we arrived, all the ships had to go out to sea because there was a hurricane warning! We were out for three days and the weather was terrible. My wife was worried - we'd just moved to this little apartment, we didn't have any food and she didn't know anyone or the area itself. But it did get better. She got to know other wives and we became friendly with a number of families.

I completed my active duty commitment in 1965 and returned to Milwaukee in August. I resumed my job at the phone company and we all readjusted to being back home. At first, I didn't report for the Reserve drills. They finally called me and wanted me to report to Green Bay (they thought I was living in Menominee). They asked me if I would be interested in coming to meetings and I thought, "Wow, do I have a choice?" Then they looked at my records and realized I had to report. I ended up going back to the Milwaukee base, but I only had to do one more cruise. It was kind of neat. I chose a ship out of Tacoma, Wash., and completed it with a friend of mine.

James Stencil As told to Vicki Schanen

Helicopter Crew Chief in Vietnam

Jim grew up in Hamilton and graduated from Cedarburg High School in 1962. He completed two years of cabinetry coursework at the Milwaukee Institute of Technology (now MATC) and was working in a cabinet shop when he received his "little letter" from Uncle Sam. He ended up spending 10 months in Vietnam.

The military wasn't really my choice, but I knew it was inevitable. Everybody was getting drafted. Basic training was not real nice. They were trying to give us a crash course in combat. There were lots of field marches, classes in self defense and time on the rifle range. They pushed us very hard. I wound up going to transportation school to become a helicopter crew chief.

When I received my orders for Vietnam, I ended up flying out on a commercial airliner from Ft. Ord, Calif. Our route took us from Hawaii to the Philippines to Guam and then on to Vietnam.

When you flew into Saigon at night, you could see the tracers coming at you. We landed at Ben Wa and an Air Force bus took us to Ton Son Nhut. That night, we had rounds come through the bus and everybody had to get down on the floor. We went to a staging area, which was for guys coming in-country and guys leaving. The guys who were leaving wished us luck. At this point, we were dispersed to all different points in the country. I ended up at Plieku in the Central Highlands, about 20 miles from Laos.

I was assigned to the 119th Assault Helicopter Co. with the 52nd Combat Aviation Battalion. I was a SPC4 by the time I got over there, so I crewed for two or three months. This required me to also man the door gun in addition to being the crew chief.

Then they promoted me to SPC5 - the equivalent of a sergeant - which took me out of crewing. I became a line chief in the hangar. I had to supervise about 10 to 12 mechanics at this point.

I didn't have to crew anymore, but I did fly quite often on test flights. There were no safe areas - a lot of times we'd be fired on during a test flight. If there was a big mission and the guys caught wind that it was a "hot" mission - not a good mission - a lot of the crew chiefs would "red x" their aircraft, which would mean that it wasn't flyable. We would work all night to check their aircraft out and make it flyable. That would require us to take them on test flights, often at 1 a.m., 2 a.m. in the morning.

Because we were aircraft, we had better accommodations than a lot of the guys, though we did get mortared nearly every night. We had corrugated metal and sandbags for our quarters. We were on an old French base, so some of the buildings were older. The food wasn't so good; our mess sergeant was selling the good cuts of meat on the black market and eventually went to prison for it. and we had a real problem with rats, too. I saw one fall from the rafters into a guy's soup. I once woke up to find one in my hair. The Vietnamese would trap and eat them - rats and rice were "No. 1 Chop Chop."

I never did get out-of-country R&R. I was waiting for Australia to open up, but it never did while I was there. Certain areas were easy to get to and Australia was not one of them. I was getting tired of being a line chief so I said to my first sergeant that I would fly again. Instead, he gave me a three-day R&R to Bung Tau, a French resort city south of Saigon. He was trying to get me to stay as a line chief and he was successful, more or less.

It was beautiful, but it was also an R&R for the enemy. It was kind of a neutral thing. I walked into a bar in Vung Tao one afternoon and they had these gals who wanted you to buy them Saigon Tea. All of a sudden they went running down to the other end of the bar to a Vietnamese man. They started praying around him. I asked the bartender what was going on and he said, "He's VC, and he just pulled the pin on his grenade." I don't know what he was trying to do - maybe he was drunk? I didn't stick around to find out.

Vung Tau has a beautiful beach. These big, poisonous sea snakes would come up on the beach. I remember seeing some Australian troops there and they would go up behind the snakes, grab their tails and snap their heads off. I had never seen anything like it.



(above) Jim served with the Army from July 1965 until July 1967. Here he is at Camp Holloway, Pleiku, Vietnam. (right) Jim with "Bikini Blue," a helicopter in his company.



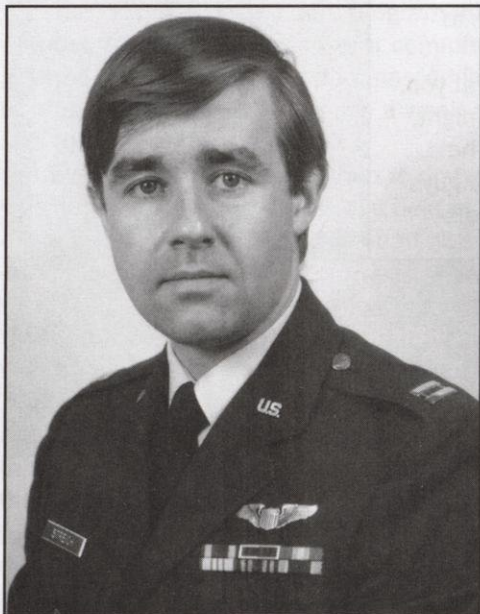
Capt. Elton Streich III As told to Vicki Schanen

Reconnaissance Co-Pilot during the Vietnam War

Whitefish Bay native Elton Streich entered the Air Force after graduating from Northwestern University with a degree in Russian. He felt he'd had enough schooling and was looking for something else to do.

It was the middle of the Vietnam War and if I didn't have a plan stateside, the military was very interested in me. I had to make a choice as to what I wanted to do. I didn't want to swing a rifle around, so I applied for Air Force and Naval Aviation, and got through to the Air Force.

When you're 22 or 23 and have the opportunity to fly, you take it, particularly if it interests you. In the Air Force testing procedure, they actually ask you specific questions: Did you put model airplanes together? Did you ever cut pictures of airplanes out of magazines? Ah-ha, they must know something! But I did feel very fortunate in getting into the Air Force when I did.



Elton served with the Air Force from October 1967 until March 1973 and with the Air National Guard from 1973 until 1975.

I had 11 weeks of officer training. It's a little easier than enlisted training, but the basics are the same: You do exactly what they tell you to do, you get up at ungodly hours, you eat breakfast in five minutes and all they do is run you around. You don't tell them anything. You're not an officer until you get out the other end.

I continued on with a year of pilot training, a few weeks of global survival training and then three more months of pilot training on the reconnaissance planes before leaving to go to Southeast Asia. On our way there, I also completed jungle training in the Philippines before arriving at the Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base, an Army and Air Force base, in Korat, Thailand.

The F105 and the F-4 fighter bombers were stationed there. They were the planes that performed the "rolling thunder" in the north and the ground support in the south - the fireworks. We knew from the moment we got there that we were not the "red hot" people who flew out of Korat. We were auxiliary compared to the fighter pilots. We flew four-engine, propeller-driven planes.

I was a co-pilot on a EC-121R. While we were all trained as pilots, whether or not you become one depends on time. We had a number of older veterans who had more hours than I did. There wasn't any chance I'd be an aircraft commander.

We flew reconnaissance missions over the Ho Chi Minh trail. When we flew at night, we could actually see the war going on. We were at 17,000 feet, which was relatively safe. And then during the day, we'd see the bomb craters, the fact that there was no vegetation.

The trail was orbited by our unit 24/7; an orbit period was eight to 12 hours. We had two flying crews per plane because of the time we were in the air and anywhere from 15 to 22 Army types with monitoring equipment. We surveyed traffic on the Ho Chi Minh trail with information provided by seismic and acoustic transmitters which were planted in the ground and in the trees by jets and helicopters. They could be triggered to give you real time or stored information. We'd pull it up electronically into the airplane. The Army would analyze it if they wanted to do anything directly with it. If not, it went down to a computer in Thailand.

They would put the information in Loran computers in fighter planes. The problem was, it didn't work. It was a mission that gave them learning experience in electronic reconnaissance. I think much of the equipment that is in use today had something to do with that learning process. It was interesting, but not very successful.

In June 1969, I was able to come home and get a little time off. I was then assigned to the Strategic Air Command, which doesn't exist anymore. But back then we were still fighting the Russians in the Cold War. I was assigned to a tanker unit that would supply fuel to the B-52s if we ever had to attack Russia. All of our SAC bases were near the Canadian border because all of our routes to Russia went over the North Pole. I was assigned to Ste. Saint Marie for two years - a place that gets 200 to 300 inches of snow a year. It was beautiful country up there. My wife and I had great base housing and great friends, many of whom we still stay in contact with now.

When my time was up, my commander offered to get me a regular commission instead of a reserve commission. But I declined because I had plans to go home. We had a family business back in Milwaukee and I was really trying to orient myself in that direction. We returned to the Milwaukee area, and after I adjusted into that life, I joined the 128th Air National Guard unit out of Mitchell Field. My time away from home did escalate, so I made the decision to get out in 1975.

Ralph Thelen

As remembered by his wife, Laura Thelen

Served in the European Theater

Ralph M. Thelen, of the Town of Grafton, (Town Ten) was inducted into the Army on Aug. 1, 1942, and his tour of duty began with basic training at Fort Bragg. After six weeks he was sent to New Orleans from where he was shipped to the Panama Canal. He often spoke of this trip like being shipped on an old banana boat. The Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean were infested with German U-boats at this time and it was a perilous journey. He spent Christmas 1942 at Guantamano Bay, Cuba, then to Panama where he trained for the Pacific Theatre. There he became ill with malaria and spent three weeks in Armador Hospital in Colon, Panama, before resuming training. In September 1943 he was given a month-long furlough after which he was sent to Camp Shelby, Miss.

Army orders had changed and his unit, the 2nd Field Artillery, was told to prepare for the European Theatre. He spent six months at Fort Sill for schooling in Motor and Full Track Vehicle Course. This education allowed him to supervise 24 men who drove trucks and other vehicles during their tour of duty. After he completed this training he returned to Camp Shelby and was given a week's furlough home to be married. I returned to Camp Shelby with him on May 14, 1944.

On May 26th the battalion left Camp Shelby and arrived at Boston after a rail journey of 1,500 miles. There they boarded the USS Wakefield, and after arriving in Liverpool, England, they went by motor convoy to their new station, Abergavenny, South Wales. The battalion left for the marshalling area near Dorchester, England, where they loaded on two LSTs crossing the English Channel and anchored off Utah Beach.

The battalion began its lengthy European combat record by landing off Ste. Mere L'Eglise, France, and bivouaced overnight in the village's rubble. The battalion traveled to its initial combat position outside of Dirinon, France via motor marches. The battalion's final pre-combat bivouac was at Lesnevens, France. Two days later and under cover of darkness, the battalion moved the 15 miles from Lesnevens to outside of Dirinon. The first round was fired against the enemy here. The battalion was then attached to the VIII Corps of the Third US Army. Little action followed until the battalion was displaced outside of Brest, leading seaport of the Brittany Peninsula.

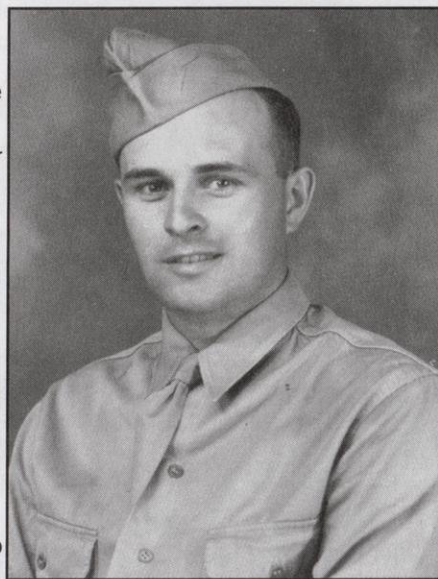
The battalion fired more than 1,100 rounds until September when it was released from its assignment with the Third Army and was then assigned to the Ninth Army.

Brest fell on September 18 and on the next day hostilities ceased on the Crozon Peninsula. The men received a nearly month-long rest. Afterwards they departed to Tongres, Belgium, and the following week moved into combat position near Kohlschied, Germany. During November the battalion occupied the vicinity of Kohlscheid and Urbach, and fired 194 missions against stiff German resistance. In December 1944 the move to Geilernkirchen, in support of the XIII corps was completed and Ralph's notes described this as a "damn hot place." In February 1945 the Roer River was crossed and the battalion was attacked by enemy aircraft. The war was almost over, as noted in Ralph's journal, only 4,328 rounds were fired during March. In April the battalion assembled near Bielefeld, Germany and went on to Petzer. It was at this time that 41 German soldiers and a hospital containing nearly 100 sick and wounded Germans were captured. The European phase of WWII ended in May with the Second Field Artillery on the banks of the Elbe River, having penetrated as far as any Allied Unit into German soil.

Ralph won the medals for the Battle for Brest; Northern France; Rhineland and Central Europe with three Bronze Stars, earning the American Theatre Ribbon, the EAME Ribbon and the Good Conduct Medal. He was fortunate to revisit the sites of his wartime experiences during a European holiday in 1980. In Paris he recalled marching through the city and under the Arc de Triomphe after the city had been liberated.

Ralph's outfit was a member of the 2nd Field Artillery, an old mule pack outfit dating from the Battle of Yorktown of 1871. The 2nd Field fought in the Indian Wars, The Mexican War and the Civil War. During WWI it arrived just two days preceding the signing of the Armistice, Nov. 9, 1918, in Brest, France. By coincidence this is where the 2nd Field encountered the first battle fought by the battalion in WWII.

Ralph was discharged at Camp Atterbury, IN on Nov. 1, 1945 as a Staff Sergeant and returned home to his wife and 9-month-old son. He resided and worked in Grafton until 1988 when we moved to Forestville in Door County. He was a 56 year member of the American Legion: 45 years at Rose-Harms Post #355, Grafton and 11 years at George W. Goetz Post #372, Forestville. He also became an active member of the Post #372 Honor Guard. He died April 30, 1999, of Multiple Myeloma.



Ralph served in the European Theater.

Max Thurner

“Motormac” in the Navy’s Amphibious Group

Maximilian Franz Joseph Thurner - try getting that one on a dog tag - enlisted in the Navy at 17. He went on to serve in both World War II and the Korean War, serving five years active duty and three years Naval Reserve duty.

We have a history of service in our family. My dad was a German soldier in World War I and he spent two years as a prisoner of war in France. My cousin, Eugene Fallier, was part of the 75th Infantry Division and he was killed during the Battle of the Bulge. I always wondered how Eugene felt, because he could’ve been shooting our own cousins on the battlefield.

I was on a “minority cruise,” meaning that I signed up as a minor and I was supposed to be finished by my 21st birthday. I wanted to go into the submarines, but when I arrived at Great Lakes, they had filled their quota. Instead, I was assigned to the Amphibious Group. It looked interesting, so I was still pretty happy about my assignment. I also became a member of the drum and bugle corps at Great Lakes.

I completed advanced training at Ft. Pierce, Fla., and that’s where we started the amphibious training. I trained to be the engineer of a small landing craft, a LCVP [landing craft vehicle personnel]. We assembled as our ship’s company in Newport, R.I., and became the first crew of the USS Hanover in March 1945, which was actually decommissioned the next year after World War II ended. I was part of the “A” Group, and in addition to our LCVP engines, we were in charge of the ship’s refrigeration, pumps and so forth.

I remember one time I was aboard ship and doing work on the diesel engine of a landing craft. The captain was on the bridge right above me, and he was angry that the landing craft was not in the water. He started yelling at me because I hadn’t done anything to solve the problem and I replied, “Do you change your tire before it gets a flat?” He didn’t bother me after that.

Our captain was a real Navy man, a graduate of Annapolis. He wanted a ship’s bugler, and I volunteered for that duty in addition to working in the engine room. I played reveille at 4:30 every morning and Taps at 9:00 at night.

The ship’s bugler came under the chaplain’s jurisdiction, and he presented me with a beautiful brass bugle, which I hung on the bridge. All of a sudden, it disappeared, so I went back to the chaplain and he gave me another one. It disappeared again (I think someone deep six’ed them). I went back to the chaplain and I really thought I was going to get out of bugling. Nope, the chaplain had a whole carton of

Except for a trip to Michigan when he was four, Max had never been outside of Wisconsin until he joined the Navy. His tour of duty took him to every state except Alaska and Oklahoma, as well as around the world.

24 plastic bugles, but no more brass ones.

We ended up in Naha Bay, Okinawa and we’d occasionally have Japanese planes fly over us. One of my jobs was to man the machine that made the fog screen. There were two on each boat and my battlestation was to generate smoke using the machine. It was effective. We were also called into service to transport 2,000 Chinese soldiers, and we made two trips to Hong Kong. I remember it took us two to three days to disinfect the ship - they washed in the scuttlebutt and weren’t used to modern things. Their daily diet was tomato juice, rice and fish scales, and they had to eat on deck. When it got rough, it came back up all over the deck and stuck to everything.

It was during this time on the Hanover that we also survived three separate typhoons. I remember we didn’t eat for three days straight because it was so rough. Our inclinometer was at 42 degrees. We tied ourselves down in our bunks inside, and we were losing boats over the side out on deck.

We were at Tokyo Bay for the signing of the Armistice, and we were part of the invasion of Korea. We took all the supplies ashore. After the war we ended up doing minesweeping duty along the Atlantic seaboard. We did find mines, and we’d cut the lines with cable cutters and blow them up with machine guns.

After my tour was up when I was 21 I joined the Naval Reserves. I returned to being a civilian to finish my apprenticeship at Allis Chalmers. I had started a new job at AC Spark Plug and had been there three weeks when there was a knock at the door and a letter from President Truman. I was assigned to the USS Muliphen and served two more years of active duty during the Korean War, though our role was to take supplies to the Mediterranean. I had the option to stay in after those two years, but I got out. I didn’t want to take the chance of being called up again. When the Vietnam conflict started, I could’ve been called back in, but by that time I had a family so I was no longer eligible.

Aviation Electrician in the Navy

David Tice grew up in Medford, Wisconsin, the second of eight children. As a child, he enjoyed building model airplanes. He worked at the IGA store in high school and, while at work, met a guy who had been in the Navy during World War II on a patrol plane. In his 22 years in the Navy, Dave was never assigned to a ship.

I was kind of interested in the Navy and in flying. A lot of my friends' older brothers had served in the Army during the Korean War and I didn't want any part of that. I enlisted in the Navy when I was 18 and committed to four years of active duty and four years of Inactive Reserves.

After boot camp, I was off to Norman, Okla., for Aviation Prep School, an eight-week course of vocational selection. They gave you a little bit of mechanical work, electronics, hydraulics and all the things they needed for naval aviation. Then, from that, they would pick what advanced school you would go to. I had pretty high scores on my basic tests, so I knew when I was enlisted that I was guaranteed electronics school.

After I left Oklahoma, I went to Memphis for 32 weeks of basic electronics training, which also included some more working with aircraft, including test flights where we would operate the radar.

We were allowed to select our duty station based on class standing. I finished first in the class in Norman and Memphis so I picked Atlantic City, N.J. I'd never been to the East Coast, but I'd seen the Miss America Pageant and knew they had a beach.

I later went to Newfoundland, where I helped extend the radar early warning line out over the Atlantic. We'd fly the 12 to 14 hour flight out to the Azores and come back. There were always three or four airplanes in the air the whole time to prevent low-flying planes from sneaking in under the long-range radar. The land-based radar could only cover close to land because of the curvature of the earth. The aircraft filled in the holes. My job was radio operator and in-flight maintenance.

We flew in horrendous weather, around the clock, 365 days a year. We made a lot of radar-guided landings where the controllers would talk you right down to the runway in 0/0 conditions.

I got out of the Navy in 1959, got married and worked as a civilian in Milwaukee for awhile before I returned for further training. I was able to return at the same rate as when I left and I signed up for six years. I went back to school at Memphis and then did a three-year tour of instructor duty. My family and I lived in base housing, and when I made E-6, I qualified for a bigger house so they moved us. It wasn't too bad.

After I finished my instructor tour, I went right back to VW-13 - the same planes I left in 1959 - in Newfoundland. A friend of mine and I caravanned up to Newfoundland; we took the ferry from Nova Scotia and drove several hundred miles of gravel road. Newfoundland was a time trip - people still used gasoline-powered washing machines. Not all of the local villages had electricity. My unit later did oceanographic survey and we worked with civilian scientists over the Arctic ice cap. We were stationed at Placentia Bay, which is a historic spot but has since been abandoned. Roosevelt and Churchill met there in August 1941 to sign the Atlantic Charter.

In 1966, I was transferred to our Vietnam project, which was probably the most interesting four months of my Naval career. It was major culture shock: You went from eating breakfast with your family to sitting in a hooch within 24 hours. When we got there, we were asked to turn in any contraband - very little was turned in, by the way - and we had briefings on the dangerous areas and the different dangerous critters, like the wild water buffalo and the various snakes. Most of our Saigon detachment stayed at Tan Son Nhut Airbase, where we had two television aircraft that flew every night. They took off about sundown and flew until midnight. The plane broadcasted on Channel 9 for the American GIs so they could see their favorite TV programs. They'd watch things like "Rawhide" and "The Beverly Hillbillies" and anything else that was on during the summer of 1966. Every time we would build a television station on the ground, the Viet Cong would consider it a priority target. The Communists understood one thing very well: Information was power. We also broadcasted on Channel 11, which was the Vietnamese programming - magic shows, news and propaganda. They featured some pretty good magicians on Channel 11.

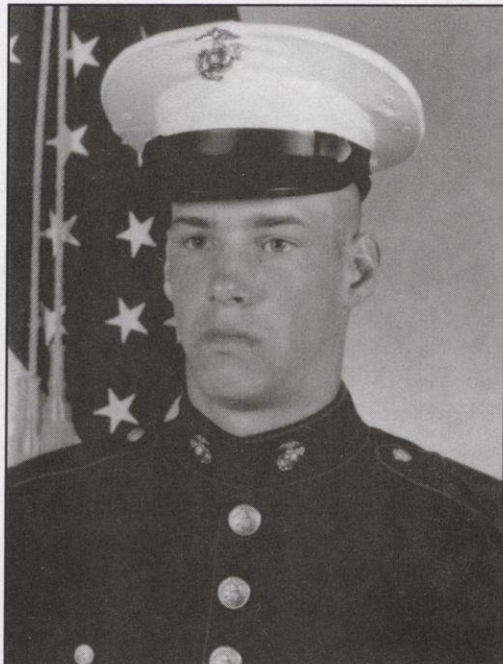


(above) Dave served with the Navy from 1955 until 1977. Here he is in Vietnam, 1966. (right) The Blue Eagle I in Da Nang, 1966. It flew in Special Operations over Laos.

Electrician in the Marine Corps

Alan Tiegs grew up in Grafton and was a senior in high school when he decided to enlist in the military. His father, Ray, served with the Fifth Marines during the Korean War, and was profiled in the first Back from Duty.

I chose the Marine Corps because my dad was a Marine. I also needed a little discipline, I guess, according to everybody. I asked to leave school during the middle of my senior year. I was a half-credit short to graduate and Marine Corps boot camp was worth two college credits. I finished boot camp in May and came home to graduate with the rest of my class at Grafton High School. Everyone was happy, including the superintendent. And it was



Cedarburg resident Alan served in the Marine Corps from 1977 until 1980.

quite a homecoming for me. There was a nice standing ovation.

My obligation when I went in was three years of active duty and three years of inactive duty.

I went to San Diego for boot camp in the middle of winter. We learned a lot of Marine Corps history and did a lot of physical training. Every Marine is trained to be a rifleman, a grunt. You don't get your MOS duty until after boot camp.

After basic I was sent to Camp Lejeune for electrician training. It was almost summertime by this point and quite warm. I spent three months there learning the basics and I was high enough in the class to choose my next duty station. I had a choice between Hawaii and Okinawa. If I went to Hawaii, it would have been for two years; Okinawa required a one-year commitment. I chose Okinawa because it was a different country and I wanted to see different places. I was fortunate in that I flew everywhere. I never had to be aboard ship, which is where many Marines are stationed.

Ultimately I went to Okinawa for 10 months and then spent two more months in Korea. I ran an engineering company - we were in charge of about 200 different generators for the communications. We had to keep them wired up and do all the maintenance on them.

A typical day for us then would be to get up at 5:30 a.m. and go to our chow hall across the road. Our facilities were just a big metal building with generators parked all over. We'd work until 3:30-4 p.m.

and we worked six days a week. There wasn't a whole lot to do.

Another guy and I bought bikes and we rode all over the island. I also played soccer for the first time - but I didn't know the rules very well. I treated it more like football; I'd bump into people. I volunteered to go to the Northern Training Area for extra training and got to repel off of 90-foot cliffs and out of helicopters. It was fun. I did play it pretty cool in Okinawa - there were pretty harsh penalties for infractions. I also earned a promotion to E-4.

In Okinawa, I lived in open barracks with wood partitions between each bunk. However, when I went on a two-month float to Korea, I lived in a tent. It was payback for the warm weather I had during boot camp in San Diego. That was different. Their weather is comparable to what we have in Wisconsin, but a little more severe.

I was called home on emergency leave when my older brother was killed, so I cut my stay short by two months. The Marine Corps took excellent care of me. The moment they told me I was on my way to the airport in a jeep. I was in constant movement for 48 hours until I got home. I took my 30 days of leave and reported to Quantico, Va. It was training base for officers, but no, no, no, I wasn't officer material. I was in charge of doing maintenance on the officers' barracks.

I did very well in the Marines - I was promoted right out of boot camp to PFC, which only happens to about 10 percent of the class and I did well in school. There was a lot I enjoyed about being in the Marine Corps. It gave me a chance to travel, to meet different people. I did tone down the behaviors that got me into trouble back home quite a bit and I knew what my parameters were.

The discipline I learned in the Marine Corps helped quite a bit. They can't do it anymore, but when I was in the Marine Corps, the drill instructors could hit people. I was "lucky" enough to be one of those at one point. When I was hit, I raised my fists and I was told to put them down. I did, because it was a command. I never had a problem after that. A lot of people back home didn't know how well I did in the Marines, but my family did. I think my dad was probably pretty proud of me.

POW during World War II

Howard Timm served with the Army's 70th Infantry Division "Trailblazers", D-Company 275 during WWII. He was captured by the Germans, New Year's Day 1945, during the Battle of the Bulge (Operation Nordwind) and spent five months in a work camp before being liberated. He was awarded the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

I shipped out of Boston with half our unit arriving in Marseilles, France on Dec. 14, 1944. We were the advance and were to set up camp while we waited for the other half of the unit to arrive. The Germans broke through the lines. They needed every available man. We were sent to Phillipsbourg and pushed the Germans out. It was New Year's Eve. We set up machine guns on a roadblock in the mountains. We took a couple of prisoners that night but there was word a counter attack was coming.

We thought, "We're gonna be in it in the morning." Units started to pull back. Our job was to hold the roadblock till they could get out. The Germans surrounded us on New Years Day. We ran out of ammunition and had to surrender. We lost one man. The other gun section was almost all lost. The guy on the machine gun next to me had been shot. We were trying to care for him but the Germans pushed us away. He didn't make it. Would we be shot, too?

We walked all day back through the lines to a barn where they were bringing POWs. They loaded us on "40&8" boxcars, that is 40 men or 8 horses, and moved us to a yard in Frankfurt. We were bombed. Shrapnel hit the three cars behind us. Americans were unknowingly bombing their own men.

From there I was sent to a work camp in the mountains on the Elbe River in the town of Bad Schandau. It was a new work camp with 300 POWs. There was no electricity, showers, bath or water, nothing, just a building with double cots. We slept on straw. The only clothes we had we were wearing. We used our Army overcoats as blankets. The prisoners worked to repair the bombed railroad tracks. And work we did, from dawn till dark. If we needed water, we'd drink from the river and at day's end, were given our slice of bread. The older guards, who'd tell us what was going on in the war, would turn their heads when we'd steal potatoes and carrots from a farmer's field on the way to work detail. We'd hide this food in the ceiling of our bunk to be shared with other prisoners.

There were younger guards, SS men, who'd been injured and couldn't go back to the lines. They were the rough ones. When I was captured, I'd been able to hide two pieces of gum. It was my birthday and I was chewing one piece as my treat. We were working and one of these SS men didn't like that I had gum. We had words. He took his rifle and butted me in the back. I went down. He put his rifle to my head. Before he could shoot, other guards pushed him away.

May came and we could hear the artillery from the advancing Russians. Hitler issued an order to kill all POWs. The guy in charge of our camp let the guards go. He left. The gates were open so we left, too. We started walking toward the American lines. We got as far as a little town and had to stop. We had frozen feet that were bleeding, and awful diarrhea. I weighed 100 pounds. A schoolteacher brought us black tea and bread. We thought we'd stay there until somebody would pick us up. The Russians arrived. We asked for food. All they had was caviar. They lived off what they could find. They were a very tough bunch. The house next to the school had some chickens that they killed. That family had a 16-year-old daughter that they raped. She committed suicide during the night. Three or four days later, the Americans arrived with flags flying. The sight of it just about made us cry.

No one can understand the horrors of war unless you were there, watching your buddies die, the sick feeling of killing someone, justifying it with "Maybe he's the one that killed my buddy." What it's like to see piles of frozen bodies just lying where they had died. To be captured, to lose your freedom. To have a gun pointed at you every minute of every day. And the joy and elation of seeing the American flag again and to know that freedom does ring loud and strong.



Howard Timm spent five months in a German workcamp before being liberated in May 1945.

Joe Tippy

Army Ambulance Driver

Joe Tippy's dream was to be a farmer and by his mid-20s, he had quite a few years of experience as a farm hand. However, he received his draft notice in 1955 and left his Iowa farming community to fulfill a two-year obligation in the United States Army.

I wasn't really that surprised when I was drafted, though at 24 I was older than most of the recruits. Most of the guys back home had been drafted, including my brother. I reported for service and was sent to basic training at Ft. Ord, Calif. The training wasn't that bad if you could get past the calisthenics tests and the KP, but overall it was okay. I left for basic training in the winter, so the weather was much nicer in California than it would've been had I stayed back home.



(above) Joe was 24 when he was drafted into the Army, (right) Outside of the barracks at Ft. Sam Houston, 1955.



After basic training I was sent to Ft. Sam Houston, Texas for training as an ambulance driver in the medical corps. It was interesting training because we learned CPR, how to give injections, take someone's temperature and basic first aid. In fact, many years later, I used my training to save my wife's life when she started choking in a restaurant. I stood up, wrapped my arms around her and squeezed and the food popped out.

Once I completed training I was sent to Ft. Leonardwood, Mo., which was my home station. For three months I served at the post hospital. We would sit at the hospital and wait for calls to come in. It was pretty boring work at times - sometimes we would buff the floor in the waiting room just to pass the time. I drove a station wagon that had room in the back for the stretcher.

A lot of recruits came through Ft. Leonardwood for basic training, and we would pick up a lot of heat cases. We would get busy between 9 p.m. and midnight when the trainees were on their night marches.

I then received an automatic transfer to a field ambulance. We had 30 ambulances in our group and we were assigned to different units on post. At that point I was assigned an ambulance that looks just like what you see in movies and on television - a big green box truck with a red cross on the side. We were required to keep the ambulances clean and stocked, but we would take them to our motor pool for routine maintenance. We'd show off to each other - you know, double-clutch them once in awhile - but we took our jobs seriously and nobody horsed around with their ambulance. We also pulled KP in our mess hall - I sure did wash my share of dishes - and we had to do guard duty around a building the size of a garage. We never saw anyone go in the building so we never knew what we spent all our time guarding.

Most of our transports were very routine and heat-related, though I once transported someone with a broken leg. The most gruesome thing we ever had to do occurred when a civilian transport plane crashed at Ft. Leonardwood. We were required to sift through the crash site and pull out the bodies, which were terribly burned. I think we recovered about 30 to 40 bodies and we zipped them in bags and put them in a makeshift morgue.

I did make two trips outside of Missouri. One summer, we spent a few months at Camp McCoy, and it was my first trip to Wisconsin. I really liked the area up there. We assisted the National Guard units with their annual training. I also spent a few months during the summer in Louisiana, which I didn't care for as much. We were in the middle of nowhere and there wasn't anything for us to do. It was hot and we slept in our ambulances. The most exciting thing about that trip was that we assisted in a parachute jump/drop. They dropped jeeps from airplanes and one landed quite close to us.

After my commitment was up I decided to return home. There wasn't any advancement in the area I was in - if you made corporal you were doing really good. They offered me a \$1,000 bonus to re-up, but I wasn't really interested. I returned home and went back to work on the farm, though I soon took advantage of the G.I. Bill and went to school in Des Moines to become a machinist.

I'm glad I did go in; I think everyone should have to serve in the military. You get out of it what you put into it.

I've been a member of the Land-Thiel Legion Post for 23 years and remain very active. I've held a number of offices, remain a trustee and this year the post voted me Legionnaire of the Year.

Ralph VandeBoom

Heavy Equipment Driver in Korea

Most people associate Ralph VandeBoom with his Town of Saukville farm, but he also served a two-year stint in the Army, with most of the time spent with Co. A, 811th Engineer Aviation Battalion.

I was a farmer before I was drafted at 22 in 1951, but I knew it was coming. I knew I didn't have a choice. But because I had a farm background, they put me in engineering because of my mechanical experience. I didn't mind. I knew that the infantry guys were always up at the front, and my training was to build bridges, repair airports and that sort of work. Engineering also interested me.

Because of my training, I was sent to Ft. Belvare, Virginia. I remember doing a lot of running in basic training. Our clothes were often white from the salt in our sweat. One time, we had to do a night run. My buddy and I knew the route we were to take, so we took a short cut and only ended up about a quarter mile from camp. When all the other guys came by, we started huffing and puffing like we had ran the whole route, too. Boy, if we would've been caught, we'd have been peeling potatoes for a week!

I had 16 weeks of training before I received a furlough and came home in early December. We celebrated Christmas early and then I met up with my buddy, Ron, in Chicago. We reported to Los Angeles, then San Francisco to board a boat for Korea. The trip took 19 days and I was sicker than a dog, though not as sick as some on board.

I remember they had cut open 40-gallon drums and the guys would hang their heads in them. What was even worse than throwing up was having to empty those drums.

Ron and I had no idea of what to expect in Korea. When we first arrived, we saw a North Korean who had been hung under a bridge. I remember Ron said, "What the hell did we get ourselves into, Vandie?" when we saw that corpse.

Korea was really cold when we arrived. We would put water in our helmets to shave and if you didn't dump out the water, it would freeze in your helmet.

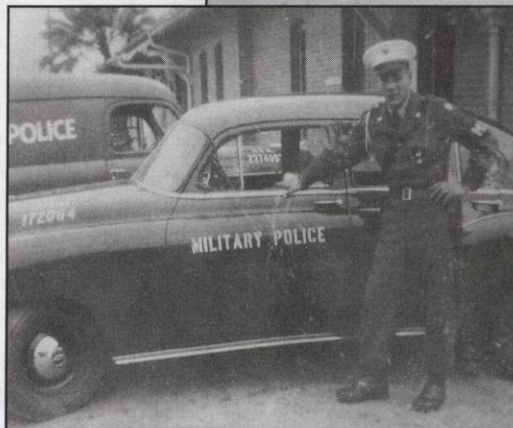
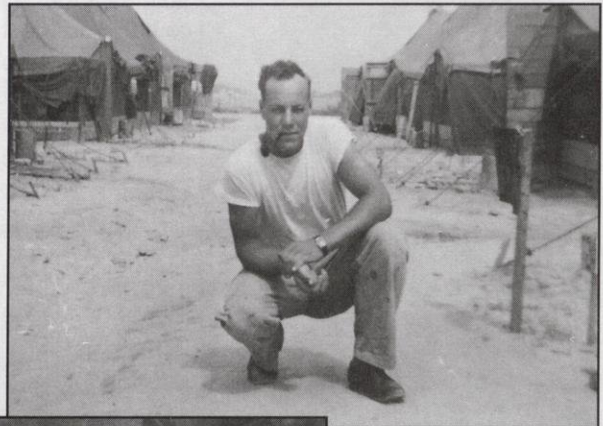
I worked on a lot of projects around Seoul and sometimes in places where I didn't even know where we were. I drove dozers, graders, cranes and a vehicle with a pan that digs out dirt. I blacktopped an airfield called K16. I remember at one point we were laying blacktop at Kimpo Air Base and the jets were taking off right next to us. A jet took off and dropped its bombs a few minutes later. The pilot then ejected and the plane crashed, all of which I saw.

Most of the time, we were pretty safe. I got shot at once. I was on a grader and I could see the dust fly up in front of me. It took about three or four seconds for me to get out of there. We could also hear the mortars going off quite often, but that was something we got used to. I worked with the Turks, and they were some heck of a nice guys, but boy, were they fighters.

I worked every day of the week and wherever they needed me. It was okay; I kept busy. I did get to take some R&R in Tokyo (we missed the plane back and caught a little heck for that). I bought a Korean rifle that fit M-1 ammunition. I brought it home and once went hunting with it. I also ran into my cousin, John VandeBoom, when I was in Korea.

After I finished my tour in Korea, I was stationed at Ft. Sam Houston and worked as a Military Policeman. By then I had made sergeant and I had MPs who reported to me. They didn't give me too hard of a time despite the fact that I knew nothing about being a policeman. I kind of liked it though, except for the domestic disturbance calls. You never knew what you were walking into with those. I was discharged from Headquarters at the base in April 1953.

I don't regret my experience. They needed me and I went. I still keep in touch with my Army buddy, Ron. I'm also a member of the Landt-Thiel Legion Post in Saukville.



Above: Ralph VandeBoom is posing in the tent city where he and the other GIs stayed. Pipe smoking was a habit for many soldiers of this era, though Ralph says he gave his up a long time ago.

Left: After completing his tour of Korea, Ralph was assigned to Ft. Sam Houston in Texas where he served as a military policeman.

Ken Vorpapel

Army Intelligence and Security

The year 1961 was an anxious one for both the military and civilians. In response to the Berlin Crisis, the American military was in build-up mode. The fact that Ken Vorpapel received his draft notice was not surprising; what surprised him was that he was found fit for duty for the next two years.

I didn't enlist ahead of the draft because I always thought I'd be rejected due to a hearing problem. But in October 1961, if you walked, talked and breathed, you were eligible. I didn't want to be a sod pounder and I couldn't get into the two areas that interested me: Photography or mechanics. I agreed to a three-year commitment in exchange for the choice of intelligence and security.



Ken was drafted into the Army in October 1961 and served most of his time on the island of Okinawa.

Because there was such a build-up going on, they started opening bases that had been closed since the Korean War. I ended up at Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas for basic training. In some ways, basic training was a joke. We couldn't do night firing because they didn't have clearance from the airport. Instead, they taped up our scopes and said, "Pretend it's night." They couldn't show us a sniper scope because they didn't have one; they couldn't show us a mockup because they didn't have that either. They ended up showing us a picture of one. On our infiltration course, they only had 2,000 rounds for four machine guns. If you could figure out when each one fired - they alternated a few rounds at a time - you could have stood up and walked the course.

I was sent for advanced training to Ft. Holabird, M.D., the Army's smallest post. We learned a little bit of everything. For example, we learned about breaking and entering and that locks are only meant to keep honest people honest. We learned how to use lighter fluid on our fingers to pull a car window down, which I don't think works with electronic door windows.

When I finished training, I was sent to Okinawa. I remember looking out from the back of the truck at the island and thinking, "My God, what am I getting into?" It was such a different way of life. The people lived in grass huts and they would work for 11 cents an hour digging ditches by hand.

I worked in the communication center gathering information that could be used for propaganda purposes. We'd watch the news reports from Reuter's and other sources, some classified, some not. We'd look for things like crop reports. We had our own radio station and we'd broadcast to China and other Communist bloc countries. It was not a bad job. We'd work from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. I had my own car and rented a house in town where I'd go at night and sometimes on the weekends. It was very cheap - about \$11 a month.

I would pay my rent to an agent and I later moved closer to him. The people in Okinawa used to drink Suntori whiskey, which is like white lightning, but they'd mix it with whatever soda they had at the store that day: Orange, grape, root beer. I also had the opportunity to experience a Chinese New Year with him, which was an experience and a half. It was the first and last time I ate raw octopus, which is like putting a few rubber bands in your mouth and chewing.

In town, you could only go to any establishment that had an "A" rating, which they displayed in the window. If you were caught elsewhere, the MPs could haul you away. The Okinawans had different hygiene standards than we did and the rating was for our protection.

I had an initial 18-month assignment in Okinawa and I extended it for six months. I had the opportunity to extend for six more months, but I didn't make up my mind in time. Instead, I was sent to Ft. Belvoir near Washington, D.C. It wasn't a bad place to be assigned, but they would use any excuse to have a parade. I was assigned to Headquarters Co. and we would periodically do security checks for the groups on the base. Our job was to make sure that classified materials were properly being stored at night. We'd had a little "cloak and dagger" stamp that said "Your friendly G-2 was here" and we'd slip them into the bags of candy the ladies would leave in their desks. They didn't find that too funny sometimes.



Ken bought a few 45s in Okinawa and still listens to some of the music.

MSG Jerome A. Wagner, ret.

Started in the Merchant Marines, ended in the Air Force

You may not know Jerry, but you probably recognize his vintage red truck, which he drives in parades along with other members of Cedarburg-Grafton V.F.W. Post 11051. Here is Jerry's story, which begins with his stint in the Merchant Marines at the age of 16.

I was pretty tall so I was able to be in the Merchant Marines the summer I was 16. We worked on the Great Lakes hauling steamship cargo: Coal, wheat and ore.

I was drafted into the Army in 1944 at the age of 18. I didn't have a choice. They sent me to Arkansas for basic training and then I had additional training in hand-to-hand combat. I was scared as all hell.

When we finished training, we were sent to the Philippines. We landed on a landing craft in Luzon and we were forming up and marched to a replacement camp when they looked at my records. They had a different job in mind for me. I was sent to an Army harborcraft company in San Fernando in upper Luzon. I became a first mate on a tugboat. The ships were coming in like crazy and they needed us to help navigate through the harbor, which was all bombed up and full of all sorts of sunken hulls.

When the war with Japan ended, they told all the guys they could go home. But they also had a special deal: If you would enlist for one more year you could go home for Christmas 1945. Of course, I did it.

When I returned in January 1946, they sent me to Guam. I was assigned to an ordinance company where I was put in charge of surplus military equipment. Since the war was over, it all had to go somewhere. We had two big fields full

of all sorts of equipment: Light tanks, people movers, jeeps, etc. The stuff kept coming in from all over the Pacific long after the war had ended.

After my year was up, I was discharged and sent home. Back home I worked at a Clark Station selling gasoline (19 cents a gallon) and doing grease jobs. I think I tried three, four, probably eight jobs during that time - I couldn't settle down. I'd always liked mechanics and started flying lessons in a neat little Aronca aircraft, so I eventually talked to an Air Force recruiter. I decided on a four-year hitch so I could go to Aircraft and Engine Power School at Biloxi AFB, Mississippi. The Air Force allowed me to go in as a corporal based on my old Army rank, which was nice.

I ended up being in school for almost a year and I earned pretty good marks. This allowed me to pick my duty station and I chose Hamilton AFB in San Francisco. From there I continued my schooling, eventually completing 21 different schools on nine types of reciprocating and jet engines plus and other aspects of airplanes.

In 1950, I found out about the cadet program. Initially, I didn't qualify because you needed at least one year of college and I had a G.E.D. I enrolled in a semester at San Francisco State and took the test, which I passed. I ended up going to cadet school and started pilot training, but washed out on instruments at Hondo AB after 92 hours of flying time on T-6 aircraft.

I continued on in my Air Force career by being shipped overseas to Japan and Korea. After completing the one-year overseas assignment, I then had a four-year assignment with the 2473rd Reserve at Billy Mitchell Field. I worked as a quality control inspector. During this tour I got married to Betty, bought a house in Greendale and we had our first son, Jerome A. Wagner, Jr. (Jay).

In 1957, we were assigned to Wright-Patterson AFB, which was part of the Strategic Air Command. Our next assignment in 1961 after Michael and Laura were born, was at Bunker Hill, Indiana learning about a new airplane, the B-58. I completed a number of jobs during that time period: Flight line controller, wing quality control, wing inspector and I worked as a line chief for the C-135 refueling tankers.

I was up to re-enlist in 1966, which would have allowed me to move into a new rank: Senior Master Sergeant, but I decided against it. I could see that Vietnam was coming. My wife, Betty and our children, Jay, Michael and Laura, moved back to Milwaukee in 1966 and we had another son, Paul. I was 39 when I retired from the Air Force.



(left) Cadet Jerry Wagner in flight school, 1950. (right) Jerry's initial four-year hitch turned into a career.

Charlie Watry

Assistant Crew Chief on a SAC Bomber Crew

When Charlie Watry looks back on his decision to join the Air Force, the situation surrounding it may not have been the best, but it put him on solid ground as an airman and ultimately as an upstanding citizen of our county.

I wanted to put a stock car in the Cedarburg stock car races and my dad wouldn't let me. I was really going nowhere at the time - I only had two years of high school, I was drinking a lot and working in a cheese factory. I needed help. So I ended up talking to an Air Force recruiter and decided to enlist in September 1958. My older brother had been in the Air Force, so that's probably why I chose that branch of the service.

After I enlisted, I took the tests to find out what training I would receive. I am mechanically inclined and tested very strongly in that area. I did basic training at Lackland AFB, but then went on to Chanute Field, Ill., for a Jet Aircraft Over Two Engine Course. I was trained to work on the big planes, which was what I wanted to do.

Once I finished training, I was assigned to Bergstrom AFB in Texas. When I first got down there, I was part of a servicing crew for B-52 bombers, which is the plane that I always worked on. We would take care of refilling the oxygen, hydraulics and oil. After a little while, I was assigned to a ground crew, which had a crew chief, assistant crew chief and two other people.

The B-52 was - and still is - a very reliable plane. Very few were lost and they were sure flyers. The plane I worked on for most of my time at Bergstrom AFB was built in 1955, making it eight years old.

As a crew, we usually worked a typical shift depending on whether or not our plane had been flying. The B-52s flew 24-hour missions, and we would work on them after they returned from a mission. Much of what we did was routine maintenance. For example, the sheet metal would crack in the wings and we'd have to repair it. We'd also take care of the mechanical and electrical equipment, do the fluid servicing and clean out the can.

Normally our crew was stationed on the ground, but there was a time when we had to fly with our plane during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Our base was on alert for about a week, and we were part of the Head Start Mission. At any given time, the United States had 12 B-52s in the air. In addition, when the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred, the ground crew had to board the planes and fly with them because if something did happen, there was no telling where the plane would need to land.

It was a very tense situation. I remember we all had to board the plane and we sat for about four hours with the engines running. Eventually the order came down from the top through our pilots that we didn't need to go.

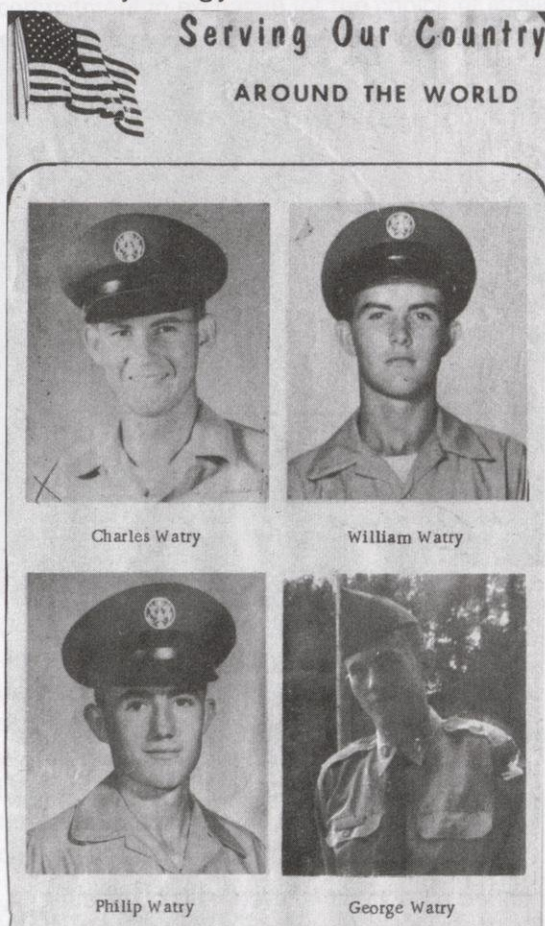
I lived in a barracks on base, and it was comfortable. We were two to a room and there was a swimming pool right outside our barracks. I played cards and went swimming a lot. I also bought a

boat while I was down there and we did a lot of waterskiing. I am a very frugal Luxembourger, and I always had money. I served as a banker in the barracks. There were some guys who would drink a lot and gamble, and two days after payday they'd be broke. That wasn't me. I quit drinking when I went in the Air Force. I didn't go to Mexico, which a lot of the guys did, and when I did have leave I would go home.

It was a good experience for me. I learned a trade, took a lot of correspondence courses and earned my G.E.D. while I was in the Air Force. I made a lot of friends and I still stay in touch with some of them through email.

When my time was up, I decided to come home. I would've loved to have re-enlisted because I really enjoyed what I was doing. I would've made staff sergeant and had my own plane as a crew chief. But I missed my family life at home more than I loved the Air Force life.

After I came home, I earned my pilot's license. I got a job at Bley's Automotive for a few years and then heard about a job from my uncle who worked at Johnson Brass. I worked there for 39 years and retired as the maintenance supervisor. The military helped me change my life around and made me what I am today. I am a member of the Landt-Thiel Legion Post #470 and I serve as the First Vice Commander for the Second District in Wisconsin.



This montage of the four Watry brothers from Belgium appeared in the *Ozaukee Press*, 1961. Five Watry brothers served in the military.

Spent 16 years in four branches of the military

On Dec. 7, 1941 Ray Weber was watching a movie in a Milwaukee theater. An announcer said: "All newspaper boys report to your stations immediately". Ray remembers making good money that day as the headline read "Japs Bomb Pearl Harbor".

As the war began, I watched my oldest brother enlist in the Navy. I always looked up to him and wanted to do everything he did – although, I was six years younger. I had to wait my turn to join the Navy. On the first night that lottery numbers were read on the radio, my other brother's number was one away from the second number read that night. He immediately enlisted in the Navy so he wouldn't be drafted.

All I wanted to do was be in the Navy. On my 16th birthday, with \$5 in my pocket and enlistment papers, I went downtown (Milwaukee) and found a "gentleman who was filled with liquid" to sign the papers. It cost me my five bucks. I packed and left for Great Lakes. My parents didn't know where I was because I just left. I was at Great Lakes for 3 weeks - just long enough to get all the shots - and my dad came and got me. A year later, when I was 17, I convinced my dad to sign the papers and he did. At one time, there were four of us in the military.

I loved the service. I liked the regiment, the structure - something which I must have missed at home. After basic I was sent to California. I was assigned to Cub 9, a communications outfit, and shipped out for the South Pacific to join with the Marines. Our main job was telephone line work, switchboard installation, and repair. We were sent into "clear" areas to string wires in the coconut trees. We became sitting ducks once we were 30-40 feet in the air. That's when we learned that the areas weren't cleared of the enemy who used live ammo.

I became an instructor, and I remember one time I was giving instructions on how to climb a tree. I hooked my belt around the tree, leaned back, climbed up the tree and right over the top and fell down the other side. That wasn't the way to teach climbing.

I moved around working on Bougainville in the northern Solomons, Green Island, Munda Island, Guadalcanal, and the Philippines. Once, I was on an LCI ship and we hit a bad storm. The ship split in half. Using what we had, we ran a cable from bow to stern. But the ship went down anyway. We were all picked up within a half hour to 45 minutes. We didn't lose anyone. No matter where you are in the ocean, land is never more than three miles away, sometimes straight down.

After that, I found out I had enough points to go home. Though, they didn't tell us about the point system. However, I wasn't out of the Navy, I signed up for the duration. But then, I didn't think about coming home until the job was done. I got a 30-day leave and went back to the States, the first time in 20 1/2 months.

Once home, I went to get my ration stamps. They gave me double for being in the service. There were advantages to being in the service. On leave, I went downtown and saw a line of people. Curious, I asked a cop what was going on. He said that that line was for getting silk stockings. Well, I didn't need a pair as I didn't have a girlfriend, but he took me to the head of the line and I got a pair anyway - for my mom. Once, when I was in the Boston Store, I thought I heard a plane diving. Instinctively I dove under a table. It was silly of me but, I was trained to be combat ready. Those things don't leave you.

After leave, I reported to the Midway in Norfolk, Virginia and boarded the CVB 41, the largest aircraft carrier at that time weighing 45,000 tons and carrying 4,500 men. We headed for Cuba then across the Atlantic. When we saw land, we were told to turn around, the war in Germany ended. I went back to Great Lakes and was discharged. I worked for the railroad for a while but didn't care for civilian life so I enlisted in the Air Force.

I left the Air Force to take a commission in the Army and went on to Signal School. After graduating from OCS, I was sent to Guam where one of my jobs was running the mess halls and communication center. After two years I requested a discharge. When the Korean War began I was called back into active duty for three years. I trained recruits that were shipped out to Korea and was later assigned to the Pentagon as a code-breaker. When the war ended I was discharged and joined the Army Reserve in Cedarburg.

In retrospect, Ray says he should have stayed in four more years to make a career out of military life but at the time he'd "just had it." But he also says, "The military put me on the right path. It gave me a center line to go down - the straight and narrow."



Ray started in the Navy, but would go on to serve in the Air Force, Army (twice), National Guard (twice), at the Pentagon and the Army Reserves within a 16-year time span.

Demolition Expert during the Korean War

Milwaukee native Cal Wenzel served with the U.S. Army from July 1951 until June 1953. He was working for a civil engineering firm in downtown Milwaukee - which was located in the building where he met his wife - when he received his invitation from Uncle Sam. He would spend 13 months and 13 days on the front line of the Korean War and was wounded twice.

I knew the draft was coming and I could have opted to stay out. I had a couple of sports-related knee injuries. My doctor said I could probably put off the draft longer, but I wanted to get it over.

I reported to Ft. Leonardwood, Mo. for basic infantry training, which was followed by eight weeks of combat engineering. We spent a lot of time in construction, but we also learned demolition and hand-to-hand combat.

I had been a squad leader through basic training and combat engineering training, so it was suggested that I go to OCS. I couldn't get the school I wanted - engineering - and the only thing available was infantry, so I said, "No thanks." I ended up going to leadership school instead for another four weeks and I eventually joined the cadre as an instructor. The trouble was that the first classes we drew were the Illinois 44th National Guard, which was fresh out of civilian life and being sent to advanced training. Eighty percent of the classes failed! After that, I decided I didn't want to instruct anymore and I volunteered for regular duty.

I could have stayed stateside because I played on the post football team, which was considered a special service. But, I said, "Nah. Whatever will happen, will happen." And I ended up in Korea.

We arrived in Inchon and they loaded us up on trucks and scooted us right off to the front lines - the Wansan Reservoir - that first night. I was assigned to the combat engineers with the 2nd Infantry Division, and I spent my first few days training with the demolition expert that was currently assigned there. I was taking his spot; he was a short timer and would be rotating.

I did briefly go to Seoul to detonate dud munitions, but it wasn't very long until I was sent back. After that, I became more or less a "detached service" person. We stayed with our company, but we would get sent out on periodic detours where we would be assigned elsewhere. We built a beautiful bridge - 120 feet long, 50 feet high - over a stream that was about 20 feet wide. This was during the rainy season and, within a week when we went back to inspect it, the water had come over and wiped out the bridge like it hadn't even been there! The I-beams were bent like hairpins. It was just gone!

We also got assigned a night job at Porkchop Hill. It was pretty loose from shells, but we laid out an antipersonnel mine field at the base of the hill and half-way up. We were just finishing up and a North Korean infantry company was coming back up the hill. They laid down a firefight - we were at the base of the hill and some of our guys were wounded. I was assisting them up the hill and shooting my gun and I got nicked - I don't know if it was a bullet or a piece of shrapnel - but I never reported it.

Some of my injuries were reported. For example, there was a time a mortar came in and the concussion threw me 30 feet into a tank. Another time when we were on the front line. The North Koreans were uncanny with their mortar. On the smaller mortar - the 61 mm - they would strap it to their legs over their quilted uniforms. That way, they didn't get any burns from the casings. Within three shots, they could walk their shells right down the trench. They'd do it by adjusting their legs. From what I understand, I was hit by mortar. I was building a bunker, the shell landed behind me and penetrated my helmet and liner and hit me in the skull. That was one time I was actually recognized for being wounded. I got one in the arm once, too, but I just went to the field station and wrapped it up.

When I got back from R&R in Japan, I was assigned to the Apostles (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and Little Gibraltar, which were all hills. It was named by the Commonwealth Division, which was where I was assigned. They used to have search lights and put them on the top of hills. They'd use them to shine on enemy positions at night. They had one that had been hit by incoming fire, so they needed people to repair it. We spent a night doing that and then when I returned to camp, we went out on patrol and got in another firefight. After that, we came back and a couple of our guys had gotten hit by bullets and one guy had stepped on a mine and lost his leg.

I was then assigned to the 1st ROK (Republic of Korea) Division near Seoul. They needed instruction and I had been an instructor, so I was pulled back. I also ended up doing training for Battalion, too, but finished my tour back on the front lines. Most of the infantry guys would rotate with 32 combat points. I had 64 total points because I had been on the line so much. And they were thinking about not rotating me!

I remember when my time was up, they simply said, "You're rotating out. Get your gear together." It wasn't a big deal of any sort. They sent me to Pusan and they couldn't find any of my papers, not my DD-214, no indication that I had been on the line at any time. Finally, they found enough paperwork for me to get on the ship and I was on my way home, though my discharge didn't come until after my eight-year commitment was up.

Air Traffic Controller in Vietnam

Mequon native Elmer Wetzel served with the Army from 1965 until 1968. A few years after graduating from Cedarburg High School, he saw that a lot of his former classmates were being drafted, so he decided to enlist.

I had been working for Boehlke Hardware as a plumber (where I started working in high school and still work today). My oldest brother, being an Army veteran, advised me to enlist because there were more choices available if I did. I joined in November 1965, just as I turned 20.

It was very hard on my mother when I enlisted. My dad had died in 1960 and she was a widow with three boys at home. I often think about what she went through. I was sent to Ft. Leonardwood for basic training. There was no time off because that was the start of the big buildup and they were really pushing us through.

I did get a short leave and came home before I went to Ft. Rucker, Alabama. They took a bunch of us out one day and told us our test scores were pretty high. They then asked us if we wanted to be air traffic controllers.

We were then sent to Keesler Air Force Base for the air traffic controller training. That was very nice - we had no guard duty, no KP, none of that. It was just a lot of school, and it was a very difficult course for me. My study habits were horrible and I didn't want to flunk out, so I worked very hard. I buckled down. My mom came down for my graduation. I volunteered for Vietnam there and, indeed, I got to go. I was 20 and I felt it was my duty.

I was sent to Ft. Sill, Okla., which was an artillery school. We were an Aviation Division, so we were kind of on our own. We created a Chinook Helicopter Company there in preparation for Vietnam. I did a lot of charts and worked in the operations office, but didn't do any air traffic control. We qualified on the M-16, which were new in 1966, in one day. Typical Army.

We left in January 1967 for Vietnam. We were sent to the Central Highlands, near Qui Nhon. I was part of the advance party. We stayed in tents at first, and we had no weapons. Our "weapons," were our tent sticks.

We had our "allies" around us - the Koreans - but they stole everything they could get their hands on. We used the Korean's trucks to haul gravel when we first got there. I rode shotgun with a Korean driver who didn't speak English. He kept pointing to a hole in the windshield: "Charlie Zing!" The shotgun that had been riding in the truck had been killed. The Koreans were stationed next to us and we'd smell this horrible odor. We found out they had a crematorium. It was cheaper to send the cremated remains home than the bodies for those who were killed in action. They'd cut barrels in half and put the bodies in the barrels. Sometimes, the nerves would jerk and the bodies would jump out of the barrels and into the fire, which created that smell.

We built the barracks for our company. When we needed more land for our Chinooks, the major had us move the concertina wire. We were heavily guarded because the Chinooks were so expensive. At the time, they were a million-and-a-half dollars a piece and we had 16 of them. They're in Iraq as we speak.

At least we got to see an air traffic control tower at this base - we knew we would work there someday! Later, I did get in there. Once everybody arrived, we worked as controllers in the day time. My side job was building hot shower facilities. We scrounged a lot but also wrote home to my boss, Earl Boehlke, and he sent me a variety of plumbing materials. Hot showers were a big deal. A lot of people envied us. We had a well, too.

We had another major who was the biggest scrounge on earth - we'd go to town and literally steal stuff (pipe wrenches, other materials) from other Army places. Sometimes we'd swap stuff. Aviator watches were very good items for swapping, and we had been assigned them as an Aviation Company. There was a huge supply place in Qui Nhon - like the biggest hardware store I'd ever seen in my life - with millions of dollars of Army supplies. We were supposed to have paperwork to get anything. Our major finally said, "Look, do you have hot showers?" No. "Well, I got a plumber here..." That was the end of the conversation. Whatever we needed, we loaded, but we had to go there for a couple of weeks and give them hot showers. No more paperwork, though.

Once our main party got there, about three or four months later, we finally worked as air traffic controllers. We had our Chinooks and we had 40-50 Hueys, the gunships. They had a horrible job - they'd go out day and night into firefights. We had a Dust Off company, and they had red crosses on the side. These could not be equipped with machine guns. They could only shoot back with their .45s. They were getting shot down constantly. We'd always wonder when they took off if they would come back. It was really sad.

I am very proud to have served in the Army.



Elmer (right) and his friend, John Morris, at Lane Army Heliport in Vietnam, 1967.

Robert Weyker

Army Infantry

Fredonia resident Bob Weyker was drafted on November 2, 1962. He was working at Gilson Brothers and awaiting his draft notice at the time. Like many local draftees, he left Port Washington, bound for Milwaukee. His destination? Ft. Knox, Ky.

I did eight weeks of training at Ft. Knox for infantry training, which would continue into advanced training. We were assigned to a barracks and then to a platoon when it all started: Get up early, out for physical training then get in full gear and march a few miles to the rifle range for some training. Lunch was brought out to us. In the afternoon, it was march back to the barracks. The evenings were free; we could do what we wanted to do.



Bob served his entire tour of duty in Germany.

A couple of weeks into basic training we had a First Aid course, then land navigation, bivouacs, squad tactical training, day and night training, chemical warfare and bayonet training. The infiltration course was something else - you had to crawl on the ground through mud. Each person was required to run the course three times a day: A "dry" run, without demolitions or machine gun fire and a "wet" run where munitions were used. When we got back from that we had to clean our rifles and put them back together again. We also did hand-to-hand combat and training with hand and rifle grenades.

Most of advanced training was done over the summer months, though we did do it once in the winter. When we did it in the winter, the training occurred on bivouac, which was where you set up your tent in the woods for the night.

Near the end of the eight weeks - it was really all total more like 12 weeks - we had what they call a "command inspection." Everything had to be in tip-top shape. We had to wear our dress greens, put our rifle, mess kit and gear out on our bunk just so. If you didn't do it right, your name might just appear on the company bulletin board as part of the K.P. list.

Finally, we reached February 16, 1962, our graduation day. From there it was on to our next training course at Ft. Benning, Ga., for eight more weeks of continued training.

From there I got on a plane and went to Ft. Dix, N.J. for a few days before getting on a ship bound for Germany, where I would spend the next 18 months. I did not know what I would be doing when I arrived there. Not only was my flight from Ft. Benning to Ft. Dix my first and only airplane ride, the journey from Ft. Dix to the port in Europe was my first shipboard journey.

When we arrived in Germany, we spent a short while at a holding facility before I was assigned to the 2d Brigade at Coleman Kaserne, which was a place where the American military stayed. There were different companies there and I was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 48th Infantry. There we went through all kinds of maneuvers - winter training and summer training - and we went on bivouacs. The Cold War was going on at this point and it was important to have an American military presence in Germany. When we weren't out training, we spent our time doing maintenance on our facilities and vehicles. We worked a regular work week and then the weekends were our own.

We had comfortable barracks. They were bay style, but they only had 10 guys in each bay. Though I was in Germany, there were other people there from Wisconsin as well as throughout the United States. There was someone there from Sheboygan and a man named Howard Haas from Grafton.

I was able to do some travel while I was stationed in Germany. We did not have cars and relied on buses. We would pick up the bus in Gilhausen, which was the village closest to Coleman Kaserne. We didn't have much to do with the German people. I did sample some of the German beer, which I thought was a little stronger than what we had at home. We also took a bus trip to a German brewery while I was there. I also saw the Little Mermaid when we travelled to Copenhagen.

I had a two-year commitment in the service and I did not come home on leave while I was stationed over there. I did write home to my folks quite often. I also bought them some souvenirs, including a few beer mugs, and sent them home.

The military gave me a pep talk - the same one they give to everybody - but I decided to come home when my two-year commitment was finished. I took a ship home and we landed in New York. We were taken to an armory and given our orders, and then we all boarded buses or planes to take us to our destinations. I took the bus home to Milwaukee and then another bus to Port Washington. I was glad to be home.

Dennis Wiebe As told to Vicki Schanen

Special Forces in Vietnam

Dennis Wiebe was actually born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada and at the age of 9, moved to Milwaukee. The Wiebe family was of German descent and Dennis suspects that Milwaukee appealed to his parents because of its strong German heritage as well.

I was working for Milwaukee Gear as a machinist trainee right out of high school. All my friends were getting drafted. I talked to a recruiter and decided to join to avoid being in the infantry. He said, "You can be a tank mechanic, an electrical systems repairman." That's what I joined the Army for and I had to serve three years.

After basic I really made a mistake. I had enlisted to be a fuel and electrical systems repairman. Ft. Campbell is also the home of the 101st Airborne and that was all they talked about in basic. I was a little too gung ho and signed up.

When I got my orders, they said Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. We learned how to repair tanks. When the time came to get orders, some guys were sent to Texas, some stayed to be instructors, but my orders were for Ft. Benning, Ga. I continued on to 21-days of intensive Airborne training and then to Panama for Special Forces training. In Panama, I met my life-long friend from Miami, Ray Henderson. We both became small weapons experts.

I remember one of my instructors - Sgt Parsons - told me that if you go to Vietnam, you need to get as much training as you can. I was going there anyway. The people who died were the greenhorns because they didn't have any combat experience and the short-timers because they got careless.

The first thing that happens to you when you arrive in Vietnam is when they open that door on the airplane. The heat is intense - 115 degrees, 120 degrees and humid. I arrived at Cam Rahn Bay in August 1969, but was sent up to Pleiku in the mountains. Believe it or not, in the mountains you needed blankets at night. It would drop to 85 degrees and you were cold because you were used to the hot daytime temperatures.

I spent most of my 13 months in this area and up north. Sometimes we guarded the engineers who paved the roads. They had their own asphalt plant and did about a mile a day. They got hit with mortars all the time, which was why I actually preferred to be in the jungle. At night, when the asphalt was still warm, either the NVA or other guys would come in and put mines in the road. A good duty for us was to pull mine sweeps. We used a metal detector and we had to sweep the whole road. Ah, we found most of them [Dennis laughs].

We also did ambushes, which are done for one reason: To kill people and it still bothers me today. One of the other things we did was to go out on long-range patrol. The northern edge of the Ho Chi Minh Trail was about 20 miles from camp. Ray and I would hike there with bare necessities such as maps, LRP rations and malaria pills. If we ran out of food, we ate snake, which was very good. The jungle was very dense and once we got there we stayed about 100 feet apart from each other and 10 feet off the trail. We counted legs as they went by and then divided by two. We did this twice each trip, three days apart. There were over 200 the first time and 100 the second time.

We were trained that if they found the other guy there was only one thing that would happen to him. They would get rid of him. You had to understand that there was nothing you could do against hundreds, maybe a thousand people. It became your opportunity to sneak away. That was really hard. Trust was hard over there. A farmer would be tending to his rice paddies and water buffalo during the day and then at night he would be attacking your camp.

I did get to meet some real nice Montagnard people, the native Vietnamese people. They were very primitive people. Seven of us became very close to a village and, I'm telling you, many, many times they helped us. One time we were running from an ambush and they hid us from the NVA in between their mud walls. We were good to them too - we took them as much food and supplies as we could. They were trustworthy people, very honest.

Dennis is very proud of his service to his country. He stated that if called upon, he would serve at a moment's notice. Dennis was awarded the Vietnam Service, the Vietnam Campaign and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry medals along with the U.S. Army Service, Good Conduct, Unit Citation, Presidential Citation, Small Weapons Expert, Master Parachutist, Combat Infantry badge and the Army Commendation medals.

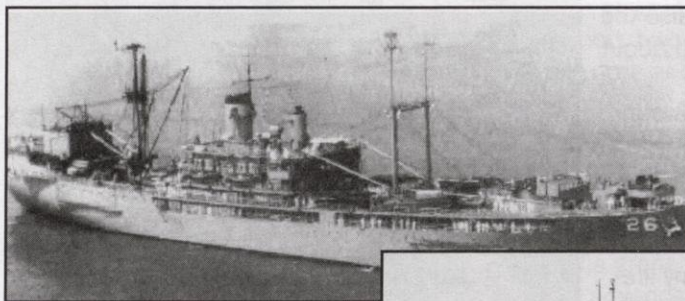


Dennis Wiebe at Pleiku/Konton, Vietnam, 1969.

Naval Radioman on the USS Shenandoah

Lee Wiskirchen served in the Naval Reserves from 1964-1970, and active duty as a Naval Radioman on the USS Shenandoah, AD-26, from 1966-1968 during the Vietnam Conflict. Lee, along with other local sailors, can be found on the front cover of this book.

I joined the Naval Reserve during my senior year in high school. The war in Vietnam was heating up and there were shortages of radiomen. During my second semester in college, I was called to activity duty and assigned to the USS Shenandoah, a destroyer tender, based in Norfolk, Va. The Shenandoah served both the 2nd and 6th Fleets in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.



The destroyer tender USS Shenandoah was decommissioned in 1985. It is actually one of five ships (including the Airship Shenandoah) to share the Shenandoah name in American naval history.



I was assigned to Radio Central as a Messenger of the Watch. Our job was to copy a broadcast, depending on what part of the world we were in, and receive and monitor from 500 to 700 messages daily. Each message had an Addressee list indicating whom the message was for. There could be as many as 60 addressees your ship had to protect for, depending on the size and importance of your vessel. This could be difficult. Each message was ranked by priority and had a certain amount of time in which to be delivered. "Operational Immediates" and "Flash Zulus" were highly important and had to be delivered to the Addressee for action, often in a matter of minutes.

Our job as a destroyer tender was to act as a floating repair ship, at the piers in Norfolk, Va., or in the Mediterranean. We could have six, seven, eight destroyers tied up along side that needed repairs. There were times I'd think, "Oh my gosh, not another destroyer tying up!" We didn't have room for more. But our ship's mission was simple: We Serve the Fleet. There was no such thing as turning anyone away. We were the "only game in town." Frequently, we would take over the communications for all those ships. We would do whatever we had to do to make sure those destroyers were in the best possible condition to rejoin the Fleet.

I remember one "Flash Zulu" message (you don't get those often) that we received while we were at sea. The USS Liberty was attacked during the Arab/Israeli War in 1967. She was under attack and didn't know by whom or why. It was the closest that I have ever been to war alert status. Israeli Phantom jets had attacked her. About 100 sailors had been killed. We didn't know it was a mistake and Israel apologized later. The information didn't get to us immediately and we thought we were going to war.

Going to war was a scary thought. We weren't armed. We weren't a fighting ship but our job was to make sure the fighting ships stayed fighting ships. We had heard that the first ships the enemy would go after were ships like ours because we're the ones that kept the Fleet working. We were with the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean, and scenic as it was, it was not a nice place to be. We had many encounters with the Russian Navy who would play "games" with us. They'd weave in and out of our ships and come awfully close to ramming us, just harassment. The Russians also had a formidable fleet of nuclear submarines, many in the Mediterranean. We couldn't see them most of the time, but they would surface periodically just to give their sailors some sun. It was scary, and I worried, but you did your duty.

It was disconcerting when I got called to active duty, but during the course of those two years, and the reserve time, I saw the importance of serving. An important element of leadership is the ability to serve. Serving is the best example of devotion to duty and duty is an important thing. "We Serve the Fleet." You don't ask questions. You don't complain. You just "sucked it up" and did your job. Though I am now retired, that applied to my career as a teacher and administrator at John Long Middle School. Change the "fleet" to "children": We Serve the Children. What a beautiful, eloquent statement!

I'm proud to have been a part of the armed forces. I wouldn't have missed it. I think it has taught me an awful lot in my life and it's something that I will never forget. I feel an important sense of pride and happiness to be part of a group of men that have that same feeling. As a member of the Rose Harms Post 355 American Legion in Grafton, I am very proud to be associated with an organization that still puts the idea of patriotism and duty to God and Country foremost in their philosophy.

Naval Electrician

Saukville's Tony Young served with the Navy from August 1989 until August 2000. The Ohio native moved to Kentucky and he joined the Navy shortly after he graduated from high school and two months to the day after he married his wife, Sandy.

I originally tried to get into the Air Force Academy and did receive a nomination from our senator, though my grade point average wasn't high enough. I did, however, still want to do military service and was planning on getting married. I thought I could join the Navy and get going. I also knew I could get money for college through the G.I. Bill. I chose the Navy because I could go into the Nuclear Fuel Program.

Unfortunately, I later found out I had scar tissue on one of my lungs and that disqualified me from submarine duty, so I became an electrician. I learned to do homework in the Navy, which was a good thing, too. I spent about 16 months in school and then went on to Prototype. It was a very tiring time; very long.

Finally, in January 1992, almost a complete two years after I entered the Navy, I finally showed up to my first real command, first real duty station. At this time, I was an E-4 and I was an Electrician's Mate Third Class. I was assigned to a guided missile cruiser, the USS South Carolina, CGN-37.

My wife and I didn't know what would happen or where this ship would be, so we decided that she would go home to Kentucky to live with her sister. But when I reported to Norfolk, Va., I found out that the ship was in dry-dock in the shipyard. It was the first time its reactors were being refueled and the cores were being replaced. It wasn't going anywhere. Sandy could have went with me! She ended up staying in Kentucky for a few months before she moved to Virginia Beach. The ship was still on blocks with big holes in its sides. In fact, the ship was in the shipyard until 1994. It was a major overhaul that went majorly overbudget. In fact, the rumor was that this ship was the reason they got rid of all the nuclear cruisers because it was so costly of a project.

At that point, we were able to go out on sea trials. Our first one was a week and that was really the first time I'd ever been to sea. I was supposed to spend the majority of my time at sea and until this time, I'd spent the majority of time on land. Being at sea was a unique experience for me. I never really got seasick, but I had a low-grade headache the entire time. It was strange: When people weren't on watch, they were really quiet. Almost the entire crew was new so we were adjusting to a different lifestyle. Of course, the higher ranks had been on other ships at sea, but we had not. Even then, though, it was their first time going to sea on this ship.

The nice thing at this time is that we had a normal routine. We'd get a schedule that we could pencil in for almost a year at a time, though that schedule was fluid. We were able to do things. We were 10 hours from home; sometimes we'd go down the coast. Still, it was sometimes a lonely life for my wife, though there were other Navy families that she could do things with when I was out at sea.

We go out for a week, a few days, doing workups. We would test things, do workups. We did a Caribbean cruise and used our radar to pick up people doing drug runs on boats. We'd keep them on our radar and work with the Coast Guard to cut them off. We intercepted two or three shipments of drugs.

We ended up going down to the straits between Florida and Cuba. This was when Fidel Castro opened up the borders. People were trying to float across in refrigerators with the doors taken off. We probably picked up 200 people. They couldn't come in the ship so we had to rig showers and toilets outside. We would take them back to Guantanamo Bay and drop them off. It was pretty sad. Thankfully, though, I was in the engine room so I only heard about this, I didn't see it. I think we made about three trips to Gitmo, which was where they all stayed in a tent city. I don't know what happened to them once we dropped them off.

Later on, we went on a six-month Mediterranean cruise and ended up in the Adriatic Sea. The very next day the battle group that was there launched missiles into Bosnia. Navy life can be very unpredictable, and this was certainly an example of it. We were safe, though. We were 12 miles off shore and there was really no threat to us.

Because I worked inside the ship, when we were on cruises, sometimes weeks would go when I wouldn't see the sun. In our area, we worked "five-and-dime" shifts: We'd have five hours on watch and then 10 hours off. If those 10 hours were during the day, we'd do our work. Sometimes we'd get some sleep. At times, it was a very monotonous life. We did do some travel; we were in Greece quite a bit and we even went to an Israeli port and, because my duty schedule worked out right, I was able to sign up for a two-day tour of Israel.

After I returned home, I decided that I didn't really want to go out again. We already had a son and my wife was pregnant with our second son. I decided to go back to A School as an instructor and I qualified to do that, and I taught from 1997 until 1999. Eventually, I became a section advisor, which was the equivalent of a guidance counselor/principal/scheduler/mother/father/best friend. I did this until I was discharged. With my first son, when I left he was crawling and when I came home, he was walking. That made me want to stay on land.

Ronald Zillmann

Navy Yeoman

Past Belgium Legion Commander Ron Zillmann enlisted in the Naval Reserves in 1959 for a number of reasons, primary among them being that many of his friends were enlisting and he didn't care to be in the Army. The choice of the Navy was a good one for Ron, despite the fact that he wasn't a good swimmer.

I served in the Naval Reserves for one year before I was put on active duty. I attended boot camp while in the Reserves and I managed to get to the end of the pool despite my poor swimming skills. We would attend weekly meetings in Sheboygan, but we really didn't do a lot. We worked on the U.S.S. Eli for two weeks. It was stationed in Sheboygan, and we would cruise the Great Lakes and do all the lowly, low-ranking jobs, such as paint chipping and watch duty.



(Above) This photo of recruit Ronald Zillmann being sworn in by Lt. Cmdr Arthur J. Zingsheim Jr., commanding officer of NRSD (9-224) appeared in the *Sheboygan Press*. (Right) Ron at his desk aboard the USS Shangri-la.



I received my active duty papers in 1960. I had been working full time as a laborer, and I was looking forward to polishing my office skills while in the Navy. I was fortunate in that I could pick my field, so I chose to be a yeoman. I had typing in high school and could type 60 w.p.m.

After heading to the receiving station at Anacostia in Washington, D. C., I was assigned to Cecil Field, Florida. I worked in the VA-46 squadron office and received further knowledge in administration. When our squadron was on base, we were on base. When the squadron was out at sea, so were we.

We were seamen to start and we were assigned to either the mess or the laundry. I chose the laundry. It wasn't the greatest job because it was hot, but the work was continuous.

Once my three months were up, I was able to go above deck, which was a big relief. I also received my third class stripe, so I had a little rank and could avoid the dirty, low-class recruit duty.

I did a lot of work with the personnel records and for the commanding chief. If I wasn't there, I worked in the officers' flying quarters and helped keep track of the aviation records. It was great working with the officers and I was treated very well. One of the perks I enjoyed was the ability to see the officers' movies, which was nice.

We did Mediterranean tours, which included maneuvers to ensure

that our presence was noted. I was able to visit a number of Mediterranean ports and saw Italy, France and Greece. I found Europe to be a very beautiful place. I saw the French Alps and the Acropolis in Greece.

I put in for shore patrol and received duty in Cannes, France. We lived in a hotel and received extra pay for room and board. Our job was to patrol certain areas of Cannes and keep an eye on the behavior of the sailors on liberty. It was good duty with extra pay.

My discharge date was set for November 11, 1962, but because of the Cuban Crisis my time was originally extended. They allowed us to go on leave and I was on my way back to Florida on the train when I struck up a conversation in Tennessee with a man reading a newspaper. Things had settled down over that long liberty weekend and he had read that all extensions were lifted. I got back to base and my squadron was getting ready to head aboard ship, but I boarded a bus and headed back home. Boy, were some of the guys jealous!

After I returned to civilian life, I was able to use the skills I gained in the Navy and worked in business for many years as a controller and purchasing manager. The three years I spent in the Navy were put to good use.

We Also Honor...



MSG Joe Josephson
US Army Special Forces

ACCS Mike Josephson
US Navy

In honor of our father, grandfather and uncle
for over 40 years of loyalty and service to their country.

Shannon Josephson, Krista and Jordan Plogger

In Memory of Cedarburg Veterans who made the Supreme Sacrifice in World War II

Lester Behnisch
Milfred Johann
Frederick Keehn
Frederick Lemke

Vernon Liermann
Arthur Mackoway
Charles Schleifer
Eilert Schuette

*Call out our names as the years go by
Remember us and we shall never die.*
"Remembered" by MSG Joe Josephson (Ret)

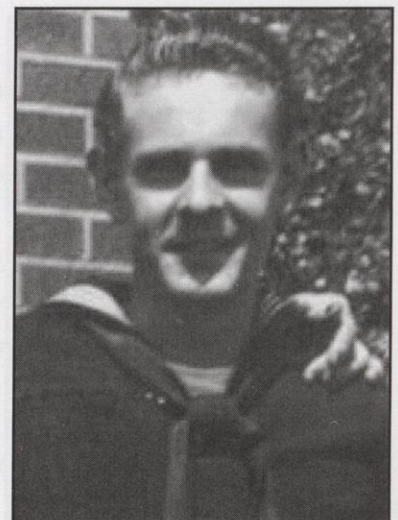


Guy F. Ladouceur

In Honor of Our Fathers' Service

Guy F. Ladouceur
Russell J. Ponton

Thank you for serving
our country.
Lynn and Bob



Russell J. Ponton



PFC Henry A. Hoffmann
U.S. Army
July 15, 1918 - June 11, 1919

In honor of our father for his military service
in France during World War I
as a machine gunner.

Remembered by Robert, Darlene, Marvin and families
and by his deceased sons Raymond
and Henry Jr., and Henry's wife Julia.



Erwin M. Hoffmann
U.S. Army
October 23, 1944 - November 16, 1946

Deceased veteran of Asiatic Pacific Theater: Ribbon with one
Bronze Battle Star, Philippine Liberation Ribbon with one
Bronze Battle Star, Victory Medal, Good Conduct, Army of
Occupation Medal Japan

Honored by Family and Friends



Lester O. Hoffmann
U.S. Navy
World War II

In loving memory of your service to your country.

Remembered by his sons, daughters and families
and his sister and her family.



CPL Roland C. Hoffmann
U.S. Army
January 17, 1952 - October 16, 1953

Earned the Korean Service Medal with two Bronze Stars,
the National Defense Service Medal and
the United Nations Service Medal

Remembered by his wife, Joyce



1st SGT Leo T. Buchholz
322nd Engr. Bn. 97th Div
World War II

In honor of our father for his service to our country.

Remembered by his children
Darlene, Diane, Dick, Tom, Steve, Bob, Denise



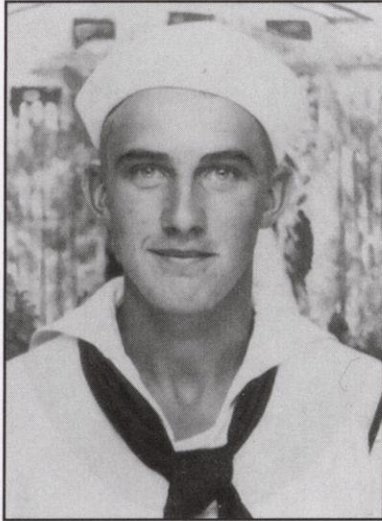
David L. Johnson
US Army 9/23/66 - 9/20/68
Tank Driver Vietnam War '67-'68

Born 8/24/46

Died 3/18/03

Married Jean Schmidt on June 21, 1969

A loving husband, father and grandfather
who is deeply missed by all.



Nicholas C. Schmidt
World War II
US Navy USS San Diego

A proud man who proudly served his country.

Remembered by his children
Jean, Nick, Dick, Debbie, Rosie and Lori



Pvt. Nicholas W. Dickmann
World War I
July 14, 1918 - January 8, 1919
Machine Gunner and Machine Gun Instructor

Remembered by his daughter,
Martha Dickmann Schanen,
his son, Nick Dickmann,
and his grandson, Nick Schanen

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About the Ozaukee County Veterans Book Project...

The Ozaukee County Veterans Book Project was conceived on Memorial Day 2001 as a way to honor the men and women who have preserved our freedoms and maintained democracy as members of the United States military. Because of their efforts throughout many generations, we live in a country where we have many freedoms, and by that very fact, we often take those freedoms for granted.

This project was a multi-generational attempt to bring those that have served together with other members of our community. The first collection of stories was completed through a collaboration with the five public school districts and the homeschooled students of Ozaukee County and local veterans who volunteered to have their personal histories recorded. Three of our five county high schools incorporated this project into their classroom curriculum and the students' work was graded and/or used as extra credit. Other students worked independently, though all students were asked to follow the guidelines provided by the national Veterans History Project.

The Ozaukee County Council of American Legion Posts graciously and enthusiastically agreed to become the founding organization for this project and owns the rights to this book. This allowed for the solicitation of financial contributions for the publication costs. As a volunteer project, no portion of the contributions initially given toward this book were used for salaries or overhead. The net proceeds of the book were, and continued to be, used at the discretion of the Ozaukee County Council of American Legion Posts to further veteran-related activities and causes.

At the same time, all veterans from throughout the county were encouraged to tell their stories on a volunteer basis. Presentations were made at our local American Legion posts, Veterans of Foreign Wars posts and the Leatherneck Club. Our project was covered in all local media outlets and through word of mouth. Students who wished to interview a family member in Ozaukee County who had served in the military were encouraged to do so.

The end result was, "Back from Duty: Stories from Ozaukee County's Veterans." This book was published in late 2002. As this first edition was winding to a close, more veterans came forward and asked about the possibility of a second edition. Work on interviewing and transcribing for the second edition, which you now hold in your hand, began in early 2003. With the completion of this edition, more than 300 veterans have shared their stories with us.

For the second edition, adult interviewers were called upon in the community. The second time around, interviewers focused on the veterans' personal experiences in relation to the historic contexts in which they served. Most of the adult interviewers came forward as a way to honor their own close relatives who have served in the various branches of the military.

The format of the two editions is similar. All participating veterans were asked to provide a service-era photo or applicable memorabilia for each page. If no photo or memorabilia appears, generally the veteran no longer owns such materials or did not have a service-era photo taken.

Audio tapes from our project have been submitted to the Madison-based Wisconsin Veterans Museum, a partner facility for the national Veterans History Project. Family members of veterans who completed recorded interviews can contact the Wisconsin Veterans Museum to obtain a free copy of the tape.

It is my hope that this project will inspire other veterans to share their stories ... and friends, family members and the general public will continue to listen to what they have to say.

Laurie Arendt
Editor and Project Founder

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

-John McCrae (1915)





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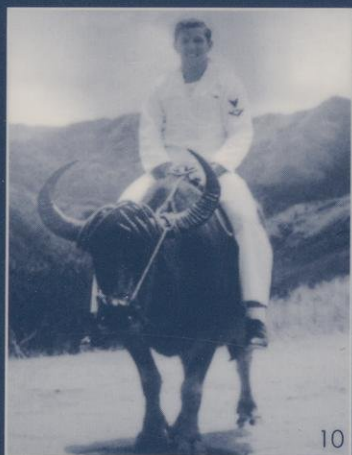
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- 1. Fred Oehme
- 2. Wayne Horman
- 3. Lou Gosewehr
- 4. Mike Norman
- 5. Harold "Dinger" Medinger
- 6. Bob Eernisse
- 7. Ron McReynolds
- 8. Dick Lallensack
- 9. John Boltz
- 10. Don Gerth

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