

Invitation to Submit Information for Hall of Heroes

Since our nation's founding until present day, many men and women served and sacrificed for our country's freedom and for the freedom of others around the world. Some made the ultimate sacrifice.

We get to enjoy our communities and what life opportunities are available to us, because of our veterans.

June 6, 2024, is the 80th Anniversary of the D- Day landing on the beaches of Normandy France.

16 million men and women served in World War 2. As of November 2023, only about 119,000 remain. Each day approximately 131 veterans die.

Unfortunately, the stories of many of these heroes have been lost to time. Once a veteran passes on; it is up to their loved ones to remember them. If those family members and friends fail to record those stories to be handed down to the next generation, they will be lost forever within a generation or two.

This is the inspiration for this Camporee.

We would like to invite you to share the stories of the veterans and current service members, from war time or peace time- living and deceased, from your families at this Camporee. This is an opportunity for our youth to get a glimpse of what our freedoms cost.

This is also an opportunity to write down your loved one's stories. Please do your part to help keep their memory alive.

Please submit an article about your family's veteran(s) with any scanned service photos you might have of them to the Council. A poster of your veteran will be made to be displayed in our "Halls of Heroes."

All in attendance will have a chance to learn about your veteran(s).

After the Camporee, your poster(s) will be returned to you to become a family keepsake to help your family keep their memory alive.

The Camporee is spanning our Nation's history from its founding to present day. Please feel free to submit stories of family veterans from any or all of those time periods.

For an example, please see the following story about Master Sargent Lawrence Johnson (Korean War 1951-1952)

Lawrence “Red” Arthur Johnson
(March 6,1929-January 25, 2018)
Korean War (August 1951-May 1952)



Written by Lawrence’s grandson Michael Erpelding

Lawrence served in the 136th Infantry Regiment, HQ and HQ Company of the 47th Viking Division of the Minnesota Army National Guard. His role was Information and Reconnaissance.

Lawrence departed for Korea August 1951 onboard the troop ship: *USNS Marine Phoenix*, crossing the International Date Line on September 8, 1951. The seas were very rough on their two-week journey. The majority of everyone on board was seasick. Lawrence found it a little better trying to stay in the center of the boat.

For safety reasons, no ammunition was in the possession of troops in transport. Upon arrival in Korea, there was a delay in the issuing of ammunition to the troops due to logistics issues. Lawrence was in Korea for two weeks before he was issued any ammo. Grandpa told me it was a little unsettling hearing constant artillery fire in the distance, not knowing how close the action was, and not having any ammo for his M1 Garand.

Lawrence was in command of a reconnaissance squad throughout his deployment. He spent most of his time in the war ten to twenty miles behind enemy lines. His platoon gathered information on enemy troop strength, locations, and movements. They Scouted the terrain and waterways to determine potential routes for Allied Troop movements to travel as safely and

effectively as possible. A huge part of this was determining if roads were sighted in by enemy artillery. His platoon monitored enemy radio communications.

With the help of his South Korean interpreters, they gathered intelligence from the local villagers about North Korean activity. They also interrogated defectors and prisoners of war for information.

Lawrence was a devout catholic who prayed the rosary daily. He exemplified being a servant leader by the way he treated others. He routinely led from the front, putting the safety of his men above his own. I will cover some of his stories later.

He told me that the proudest thing about his service was that he never lost a man under his command.

He treated everyone with respect. This included the local population. When Lawrence and his interpreter would meet with the villagers, they would often trade canned food and chocolate bars for fresh vegetables to bring back to base as a gesture of good will.

Villagers would often carry large bundles of wood on their backs, walking along the road back to their village for cooking and heating. Some petty GIs started the bad act of giving them a kick or a shove when they passed by in a jeep, causing them to fall in the ditch. When Lawrence caught them doing this, he and his men stopped them with threats of putting them on report with formal charges if they ever caught them doing that again, while helping the villagers back up and making sure they were okay.

At one point Lawrence was given command of two GIs who were under disciplinary actions for behavior they were accused of in their old unit. They were told that being sent to recon was their last chance, otherwise they were going to prison. When Lawrence met them, they both said: "Honest sarge we didn't do it!" He told them he didn't know what they did, and he didn't care. If you tell the others, that's on you. This is a fresh start. He introduced them as just two new members to the squad. They became great members of his squad. They did so well that one of them got promoted to be a driver for a general!