

The City of Yankton would like to thank Dave Hosmer for all of his time spent interviewing each of these Veterans, along with the countless presentations that he has put on to spread the message about our Veterans. The City of Yankton would also like to thank the Veterans, their families, their friends, and their supporters in sharing their experiences. Without you, we would not live in a country that is free. Thank you to all Veterans for your sacrifices.





Raymond Pravecek

Raymond Pravecek was born in rural Tyndall where his grandfather homesteaded. Both of his parents are of Czech heritage. In October of 1915, his parents moved to North Dakota. Two years later they moved back. His

father was not active in WW1, but he was called to duty and then the War ended. The Depression was tough on his family. Dirt was three feet deep on fence posts. He tended their cattle in ditches because their pastures were so burned up. They raked Russian thistles and stacked them for feed. He turned 18 in 1944 and was drafted in the Spring of 1945. He met Alice Melichar at a dance just prior to leaving for boot camp. It was so hot at Camp Fannin, Texas that you could see your footprint in the blacktop! That didn't stop him and Ray Goebbels; they once walked 8 miles to purchase two watermelons. They were tasty. Ray landed at Kobe, Japan, in the fall of 1945, but his occupation duty in the 33rd Signal Battalion was at Yokohama. His primary duty was to stand guard. He once saw General McArthur outside his headquarters. Many women dressed in traditional Geisha attire. Another of his duties was to look for weapons. They entered caves and removed them by the truckloads. He returned home on October 31, 1946, and he and Alice married in October of 1947. They have three children. Until 1994, they farmed. He recalls purchasing a farm and the price as \$163.00/acre. Ray also beat stomach cancer, a tremendous display of fortitude.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Dr. G. Malcolm Jameson

“Mal” was raised in Sioux Falls. Both his Grandfather and Father were wardens at the South Dakota Penitentiary. Wow! There are several stories about them. At the end of 1944 while he was still a senior at Washington High School, Mal successfully completed the Eddy Test, designed to measure mechanical skills. Those test results meant he would enter the Navy as a Seaman’s 1st Class, although his activation was deferred until after he graduated. When the Germans surrendered “we already had orders to go to boot camp. We got a letter which instructed us to return our tickets. The military was re-evaluating. We waited, waited and waited.” “My dad had been Sen. Chan Gurney’s campaign manager. He suggested I write him.” Here is a young man who wanted to serve so much that he wrote his congressman! “I was working construction and was in a 12 to 15 foot deep hole. Someone hollered, and I looked up and saw my smiling father at the top of the hole waiving a letter. I was to be in Chicago in three days!” After the bombs were dropped “the Navy wouldn’t send me to school unless I became regular Navy. That was not my plan.” He “monkeyed around” on fire watch and night details and then worked at a separation center. After his discharge in 1946, Mal attended Augustana College and later obtained his medical degree.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Robert Kolberg

Bob's Grandfather Pete was born in Kolberg, Norway and emigrated to Wisconsin and later South Dakota. Pete cooked aboard the Nellie Peck, a riverboat captained by Grant Marsh. That same ship took Gen. Custer to Montana in 1876. Bob was born in 1925 in a house located to the east of Yankton. A wonderful story teller, Bob "learned" to smoke cigarettes behind the barn; he put the wrong end in his mouth which ended that "habit." He graduated

from high school in 1943. Bob was drafted March 30, 1945, and swears a neighbor advanced his draft due to a land dispute. He took the USS Bunker Hill to Hawaii. At Pearl Harbor, Bob admitted that he learned to type in high school. The man announced, "Robert Kolberg, Robert Gross and Robert Lantz please step aside." He was then assigned to Naval Pacific Headquarters in Honolulu. "I'm lucky my name is Robert." The other men were shipped to New Caledonia to prepare for a possible invasion of Japan. He liked Hawaii, especially the weather. "I can't complain." He had plenty of time to enjoy the warm sun and the local sights of interest. On April 1, 1946, there was an Alaskan earthquake which caused a 36-foot high tidal wave struck Oahu. After his discharge in 1946, he took a train to Ft. Dodge, Iowa. He hitchhiked the rest of the way home. He farmed for many years and drove a school bus for Gayville for 38 years. He married Anna Geurink and they had three children: Lisa, Laura and Dan.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Martin Mazourek

Martin's extended family has deep military ties. In addition to his brother "Bennie," 7 others served during WW2. His cousin Joseph Straka died on October 12, 1942 aboard the USS Boise. "He was a good kid." Times were so hard during the depression that they only survived because his father worked the WPA. Martin worked as a sweep at the school, and, with his pay, he and his Grandfather feasted on divinity. He graduated from Wakonda High School in 1944 and was drafted in January of 1945. He arrived at Eniwetok in May of 1945 and was assigned to the USS Wisconsin. The men were asked, "Can anyone type 60 words a minute? 50?" Martin timidly raised his hand and was assigned to the executive officer's staff. He typed and organized the records for 3,600 men aboard ship. In early June, he suffered through Typhoon Connie. He saw 30-foot waves, but never was he sick. He typed during the storm! "The typewriter had a spring on it. You had to wait for that carrier to return according to the list of the ship. The other way you pushed it." As a member of Task Force 58, his ship traveled to Japan, off the shore of Kyushu. They cleared islands and fired at targets at night. The ship visited Tokyo Bay after the surrender, but it left before the signing. They celebrated with water and coffee. The Navy wanted him to re-up, but he refused. He was discharged in May of 1946. He farmed and later owned a lumber yard. He has two children.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Melville Larson

Melville, named after his Mother's maiden name, was raised on a farm south of Meckling. George and Ivy raised two children. George served in WW1 and fought at Argonne and St. Mihiel but did not talk about it. After graduating from Meckling High School in 1940 (and 1 semester at USD), Mel worked as a machinist in Sioux

City and then moved to Omaha. That's where he met Ina Johnson, who was working at the Marietta Bomber Plant. Shortly after they married on June 24, 1944, he was drafted into the Navy. His basic training was at Great Lakes, IL. It was his first train trip, and he was about to experience his first huge boat trip. At Bremerton, WA, he was assigned to the USS Bunker Hill, an aircraft carrier. She was in port being repaired after two kamikazes near Okinawa ripped into her. The war ended before she was completed, but Mel had many months of service to go. He was paid \$1 per day. Beginning on September 27, 1945, he participated in Operation Magic Carpet, which returned tens of thousands of American GIs. Mel saw much of the Pacific, including Pearl Harbor, Leyte, Guam & Saipan. The sea made him sick just once. He returned home in January the following year and was deactivated in January of 1947. After his return, he started farming and moved to the homeplace in 1971. They were married 74 years and raised three children.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Bernie Kline

The war ended Bernie's chance to be a farmer. There were no hired hands to help his father on the farm during the war so they sold it and moved to Seattle, which is where Bernie was at when he turned 18. He thought he might like the Navy. At a military center, he saw the Army and Navy reps. The Navy man asked, "Why do you want to go into the Navy?" "I thought it would be a better deal." "Sorry, we aren't taking any Navy guys today." The Army guys loaded the men into a truck. "I'm in the Army!" "I thought I was going home." He called home and told his parents. "Talk about a sad 18 year-old kid." His basic training was shortened due to the need for replacements during the Battle of the Bulge. They wanted them quickly, so he left aboard the Queen Elizabeth. Assigned as an infantryman to the 254th Regiment, 63rd Division, Bernie was sent to Eisenhower's Thorn – the Colmar Pocket in central Alsace, France. Pride and emotion drove the Germans to fiercely defend the area. There is a reputation that stoic veterans have put the war out of their minds. Bernie is one of those men. In 1946, Bernie was shoveling grain at the Schwenk Brewery when he said, "There has to be something better than this!" He and his buddy drove their Harleys to California to watchmaker school. He later purchased Fox Jewelers in Yankton, and still works on watches today. He and Geraine raised two children.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Robert Nelsen

Both of Bob's parents were born in Denmark, but they met in America. They lived in Council Bluffs with their 8 children. His father, a union man, was an amazing craftsman who performed work for railroads. He also operated a bar /restaurant in Omaha. Bob played clarinet in high school and later bought a saxophone from his teacher.

Because so many musicians were in the military he played in a dance band which paid \$6-8 per night! After he graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in 1944, he was hired to lay track for the Illinois Central RR. He left for boot camp at Camp Walters in September and was later assigned as a replacement in F Troop in the 8th Cav. Reg., 1st Cav. Div. He arrived in Manila aboard the USS Monterey in March of 1945. Manila, which was utterly destroyed, had just fallen and a large group of Japanese soldiers had escaped. F Troop participated in the "mop up," which is shorthand for tracking down the stragglers. Nelsen participated in lots of patrols looking for the enemy. His detailed stories are scary and moving at the same time. By way of attrition he rose in the ranks and just as he was to take over his company he was placed into the 1st Cavalry Band. It may have saved his life. After the War he traveled far and wide. He married Delores Hult in 1950 and they had three children. He worked for the RR, but music is his passion.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Fred Branaugh

Fred was raised on a farm near Armour, South Dakota. His father worked with the WPA near the Ft. Randall Dam. After graduating from the 8th grade, Fred went to work, which was fairly common at that time. He enlisted in the Army in February, 1945. After basic training, while on leave, he married his sweetheart, Isabel Meng. He thereafter shipped out to Manila, Philippines where he was assigned to the 6th Division. He arrived in August and the War ended on September 2nd. But, he wasn't sent home! His unit was sent to Korea for occupation duty. There were mines along the way and the men were told to shoot them, which was preferable to a collision with a ship. The sea was very rough and his ship sank. Fortunately, all of the men were fished out, but every vehicle went to the bottom of the sea. His division arrived at Inchon on September 25th and settled in at Busan. Japanese soldiers were to be returned home. They practically "dug them out of their holes." The Americans also disarmed the populace and formed a government. There was extreme poverty in Korea, and he saw many orphans. The men in his Quonset hid two boys and fed them. Fred set sail for the States out of Shanghai, China, where he had been for three weeks. They ran into a typhoon, and returned to Korea. Would he ever return? He arrived home on Christmas Eve of 1946. Fred loved work and was a jack of all trades. He and Isabel raised four children.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One

Gene Bulian



Gene grew up on a farm near Groton, South Dakota. He lived through difficult times. The dust on the roads was so thick his mother drive two miles on the rim without knowing it! They sold milk and eggs and used the money for groceries. His parents had 4 sons, all served and safely returned home. He was drafted into the Army in September of 1944. Boot camp was at Camp

Fanning in Texas. It was his first train ride and first time out of the state. On February 19, 1945, the Queen Mary took him to Scotland. He was ill most of the way. He ended up in Belgium where he met his unit, the 345th Regiment attached to the 87th Division. Their first mission was to take Koblenz, Germany. He recalls the attack very clearly. He tossed a grenade into a building filled with Germans and wondered, "What good is that building?" There were rumors of a sniper. He held his helmet above him on a stick. A shot rang out and dirt kicked up. Yep, there was a sniper. After the city was taken his squad patrolled throughout the city. They next crossed the Rhine River on March 26th under smoke cover and darkness. He was lead scout for a time. He was injured behind enemy lines. His unit was near Pilsen, Czechoslovakia when the war ended. He married Evelyn Heinz in 1952 and they had seven children.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One

James Black



Jim graduated from Fullerton High School in 1942. He and five of his classmates put college “on hold” and moved to California where he worked at a Northrup aircraft plant. He enlisted in the Navy in 1943. Submariners had to volunteer and his friends suggested that he join. What was their pitch? “You will never come home injured!” Submariners, as a group, had the highest losses during the war, but

they had tremendous success. 52 US submarines were lost during WW 2, and a memorial dedicated to the USS Scorpion is located in Yankton. Submariner boot camp was in San Diego. His first duty was aboard the USS Sperry, a sub-tender. He spent five months on Guam where his group maintained and repaired 20 submarines. He was then assigned to the submarine USS Silversides and was aboard on her 14th Pacific Ocean tour. They spent 41 days off the coast of Honshu, Japan, in support of American air strikes. She could go under water approximately 200 feet for up to 8 hours on battery power. She travelled 7 knots under and 18 knots above water. They picked up two downed pilots – Lt. Burdick Burtch who flew off the USS Independence and Lt. James Hinkle who flew off Iwo Jima. Diesel fuel odors were forever present. On leave, Jim reported that the fists would fly right after someone yelled, “I smell a submariner!” Jim has six children and he is married to Barb.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Darold Adamson

Darold and his two brothers grew up in Centerville with their parents, Lauren and Blanche. He proudly stated, "We are direct descendants of George Washington's Brother." Blanche's Brother "was a [French] translator and the last person present at the signing of the Armistice [to end WW1] who was alive." As a proud sportsman, he recalled firearms in the backs of many cars during his school

years. He graduated from high school in 1945 and was ready to attend USD when he enlisted in the Army. He boxed a little, so he took on the Midwest Golden Gloves champion from St. Louis who "beat the tar out of me." As a med tech, he worked in Pasadena at a hospital that performed plastic surgery on injured veterans. "I saw real heroes." One day he met a beautiful blonde from Centerville. Her best friend was the sister of Darold's girlfriend, Lou Harmon. On his way to Korea he was almost court martialed for stealing a pie in a case of mistaken identity. The real culprit was nabbed after Darold threatened to return to boxing! "I was assigned to chief clerk and officer manager for Col. Shimmel, head of all dental installations in Korea." It wasn't safe. North Korean crowds tried to rush soldiers to kill them. He had two close calls. He returned in July of 1947, married Lou in 1951, and they had five children.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Dale Haug

In August of 1942, at the age of 18, Dale Haug enlisted in the Navy. They wouldn't take him due to an eye problem. "I went around the corner and enlisted in the Army. If you were warm, they would take you." Basic training was a long way from Clear Lake, SD. "They put us in half-tracks, and we trained in the Mojave Desert." He crossed the Atlantic

aboard the Queen Elizabeth in December of 1943. "I was so seasick I thought I would die." At about noon on D+1, Dale touched sand on Utah Beach. "I didn't get any sleep the night before and none for the next 3-4 days either!" His first major battle was at Carentan. "I didn't look around too much; you were trying to save your own hide." He watched the aerial bombing that preceded "The Breakout." "3,000 bombers just leveled that thing out." They moved fast. "We were going down this road. Germans shot at us and a bullet went round and round inside the halftrack and went out the other side! We had a quarter inch of armor all the way around us. They didn't hit a soul. It was a miracle." They moved so far and fast that they ended up in Schinveld, Holland. On December 15, 1944, they entered a town. His halftrack backed in first, but a second halftrack rolled on a mine. "The next thing I remember I was in a Belgium hospital." He recuperated in Kansas for five months. Dale married twice and has three children.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Glenn Grosshuesch

Glenn grew up in Yankton. He contracted rheumatic fever and was quarantined. Alice Ferguson, a former slave who escaped to Chicago by utilizing the Underground Railroad, sat under his window and sang him songs and told stories from the Deep South. Both of his brothers enlisted: Lee in the Army Air Corps and Jerry in the Navy. Glenn quit school after the 8th grade. "I was a wild, dumb kid." Later, with the help of the GI Bill, he proudly completed high school, and earned both a BS Degree at Southern State Teacher's College and a Masters Degree at Colorado State University. He enlisted in the Navy in 1943 and was assigned to the Armed Guard Division, which manned the weapons on merchant ships. Merchant ships deliver materials. He was a trainer on a 5.38 mm cannon and worked on three different ships: SS Glackens, USS Tyler & the USS Sioux Falls. He once went 27 days from San Francisco to New Guinea without seeing any land. His ship had a bow-to-bow collision while traveling in the China Straits. The collision caused the 55 gallon barrels of gas to leak. It was a "little hairy." He saw constant air raids at Okinawa in April of 1945 after the invasion; several ships were hit with kamikazes. "It was a sobering sight realizing the loss of life." "Smitten" by Phyllis Brunick, they married and they have three children.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Robert Boe

Harry and Hazel Boe raised Robert and his three siblings on a farm 9 miles west of Irene. Harry was also a WPA supervisor. Hazel's father was a construction worker on the Meridian Bridge. As a youngster, he grew melons and popcorn for spending money. He graduated from Yankton High School in 1944. In the spring of 1945, Robert was drafted and sent to Camp Robinson for basic training. His first job was to work on the cook car in a troop train. It was a box car with a couple of 2x4's across the doors. His last name was near the front of the alphabet, so he pulled KP duty too often. He stayed stateside, but he ran a supply room without the rank! During the winter it was cold and muddy. He helped close the camp in June of 1946 and transferred to Ft. Sill where he helped train soldiers. He actually volunteered for detail and ran a chain saw to create a new golf course. He was discharged from there in November of 1946. He and Ardis Wek began dating after they met in 1948 and they married on June 4, 1950. Ardis taught for over 25 years. He started to farm but quit in 1963 to teach in Viborg and to work in the lumber yard. He retired from working at the Yankton lumber yard in 1988. He and Ardis had 6 children. One son served in the Air Force and his brother Donald served in the Korean War and was awarded a Purple Heart.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Arland Westegaard

A Viborg native, Arland grew up on a farm with six siblings. The times were tough. Everyone knew of “Coffee Road,” constructed by WPA men who drank a little too much coffee during break. In 1936, he paid \$3.00 to his uncle for a Model T. “Dad was madder than a hornet!” He entered the house after the attack at Pearl Harbor and saw his father crying as he listened to the radio. After helping with the fall corn crop, Arland enlisted in the Navy on January 20, 1944, and attended aviation mechanic’s school. He knew most everything about radial engines. As a young man, he was somewhat reckless. To test his mechanic work on planes, he stood behind the pilot as he took off and then flew away. He did this with P-38 Lightning, P-47 Thunderbolts and P-51 Mustangs. It was dangerous. “I was 21. I was gonna live forever!” Although he was stationed in Oklahoma, he was classified as “overseas.” This gave him slightly more pay too. He was discharged on March 30, 1946. As a civilian, he helped to discharge military men, and eventually worked in the electrical field. Arland wired the home place to get electricity through the REA. Prior to that, they used a wind charger and generator to power their radio. As an electrician he worked for Bauer Electric for nearly 40 years and retired in 1984. He married Bernadette Dangel on October 3, 1951. As of their 60th Anniversary, they had 9 children, 14 grandchildren, and 12 great-grandchildren!

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Ross West

Ross West was born near Sheldon, North Dakota. A natural story teller, he tells lively stories of farm life during the 1920s and 30s. The Model T didn't run well in the wind, so they cut the cab down and created a pickup! The neighbor girls farmed with horses. He thought the "world was coming to an end" during the dust storms. He quit school after the 8th grade to herd cattle and to work for the railroad. The Army drafted him in August of 1944. Ross suggests that no one volunteer during basic training. Men who had a college education "volunteered" to clean up cigarette butts. The sergeant joked that any man who dropped a little change would not get extra duties! It worked. Ross arrived at Marseilles, France on January 15, 1945. He was in the 2d Battalion, 7th Regiment, 3rd Division, which was Ike's favorite. Ross operated a water-cooled machine gun. They fought in the infamous Colmar Pocket and then attacked the Siegfried Line. On March 15th, they attacked near Utweiler, Germany. 222 men were taken prisoner, including Ross. After being captured, German civilians took his picture. The civilians liked them – "infantry gut, gut" – and brought them a big tub of beer. "They kept us marching," but they never went to a camp. Their guards surrendered on April 28th and they were freed. They were flown to Reims, France where they were fed and bathed; he shipped out June 12th. He was discharged in June of 1946 and farmed many years thereafter. He and Marjorie Beckett were married on October 25, 1949. They had seven children.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Roy Voracek

Roy was born near Tyndall in 1925. He read in detail about the Pearl Harbor attack in his father's Czech newspaper. In 1943, he was drafted into the Army. "I can't swim, so it will have to be the Army!" In early February of 1945, he shipped out from Ft. Ord and sailed directly to the Philippines where he was assigned to the 7th Cavalry Regiment in the 1st Cavalry. Manila had just been liberated. "They had blown up everything." His unit was instructed to follow several divisions of retreating Japanese into the jungle. "It was so damn thick there. The Japanese sat in round holes. They had brush over the top. We would go right by them." "Our Sergeant told us, 'If you hear a tap, tap (gesturing with hand on head), hit the ground!" "They tapped the hand grenade and threw it right at us." "The area we were in had a rainy season and a dry season. A bunch of us after being in that rain were soaking wet day after day, month after month and we finally got jungle rot on our feet." He was sent to New Guinea to recover. "I was in the hospital for a little over three months." "When I came back to my outfit, about a week later, they dropped that bomb on Japan. We would have been on the way to Japan." "Our regiment was the honor guards for the treaty signing aboard the USS Missouri." He knew General MacArthur. "He liked me, I liked him." He visited Hiroshima. "Acres and acres. There was nothing there. Just like this floor." He married Fern Wedmore in 1956 and they had five children.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One

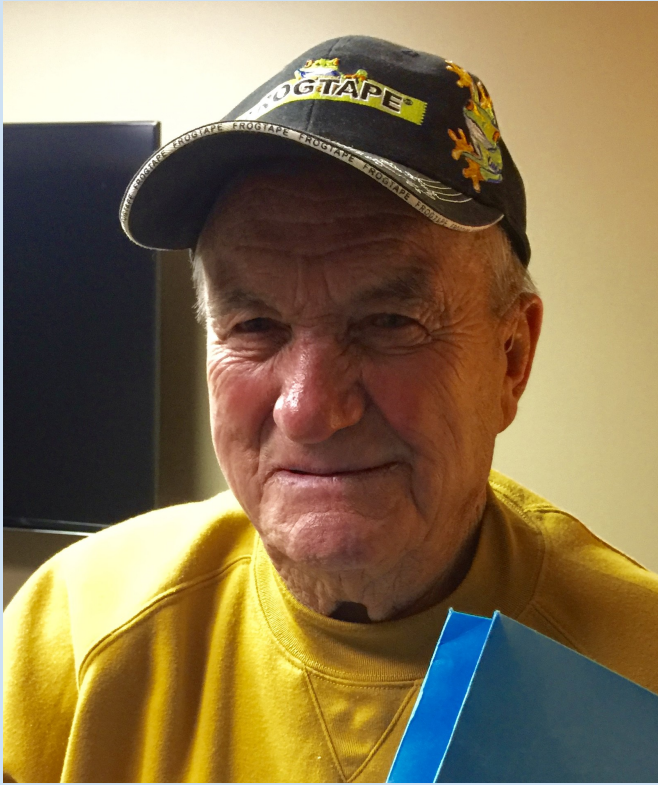


Eugene Weidenbach

"I was destined to be a farmer." So, instead of high school, Gene worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps, earning \$1.00 per day. After enlisting in the Army in August of 1942, boot camp was at Ft. Robinson. "It wasn't physically demanding; I was as hard as a nail. It was a mental thing." As a member of the 533rd Ordnance Co., which repaired M-4

Sherman tanks, he shipped out for England in February of 1944, and arrived on Omaha Beach on June 21st. He was stationed at Cherbourg, readying tanks for battle. Gene loved the French. "We traded one bar of Lux or Camay soap for four eggs." "I never saw a Frenchman drink water! The locals were particularly fond of apple juice fermented with horse manure – which is called Calvados! It produced the nicest, blue flame in my Zippo." He moved to Alsace-Lorraine in March and attached to the 344th Engineers, which built the Ernie Pyle and Triumph bridges across the Rhine. "To locate the enemy at night we modified an M26 Pershing tank and installed a 30-inch carbon spotlight. From 1 mile away you could read a newspaper in the dark!" The day the War ended "didn't mean much;" it was "just work." He returned stateside and enjoyed a steak at Jack Dempsey's. Meeting his wife was "an emergency." "She was chasing me around a corner, I slipped, and I fell for her." They farmed and raised six children.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Roman Arens

Just as his father Edward, Roman Arens was born at the home place. The house, which is on Bow Creek, is nearly 120 years old. There were 11 children and Roman is the second youngest. He graduated from the 8th grade and then went on to help the family. Only one sister attended high school. Roman walked out of church and was told about Pearl Harbor. "That was pretty dirty."

He was drafted into the Army in 1944. At boot camp at Ft. Riley, Kansas, he trained on horses. Mickey Rooney was in the same unit. Roman sailed westward under the Golden Gate Bridge. "On a clear night you could see 8 miles." But the ocean was very rough. In April of 1945, he arrived in Manila, which was still smoldering from the battle. Mickey Rooney did not join them. "I was in the front line. I was a mortar gunner with the 1st Cavalry." "The infantry was in front of you when you fired. You had to shoot over the top of them. Always shoot long. The spotter up in front would say, 'Bring it back, bring it back.'" I asked if he was scared? "You know, you gotta be!" "I dug a foxhole every darn night." One "moonlight night the Japanese came over the hill. With machine guns they just kept mowing them down up there. The ones that got through, they came with a bayonet tied to a stick. That's when they tried to get you in your foxhole." The Army wanted him to stay in the reserves, but he said no to Korea. He met Arlene, his future wife, at a Bow Valley Dance. They married in October of 1950. I asked why he has lived so long? "I don't know. The good Lord left me." Just like his Father and Grandfather, he has farmed for many years.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Kenneth Snow

The Snows, who have farmed near Gayville for many years, survived the 1930's. Ken kept busy hunting pheasants and rabbits with his .410 and fished for bullheads in the James River. After he graduated from Gayville High School in 1943 he was drafted in November of 1944. He chose the Marine Corps and boot camp was at Paris Island, SC and Camp LeJeune, NC, which he called "jungle survival training." In August of 1945, he shipped out to Hawaii and then Guam, where the new 6th Marine Division was training. When he arrived, the War was over. For a short time, he assisted in the repatriation of Japanese, but he was later transferred to a howitzer unit stationed in Tsingtao, China. During his time there he wrote to his sweetheart, Koreen South, and his mother. All of his letters home have been saved! Ken said the Americans stood between the Chinese Nationalists and Communists. It was "kind of like being the United Nations." At first, the Chinese "were happy to see us." After the War the Communists "came out of the hills" and clashed with the Nationalists. "It was very obvious that we were supporting the Nationalists." Ken had one Chinese friend. While on patrol, the friend stopped him and asked him, "Do you believe in God?" "Of course I do," Ken replied. After duty he visited with him. He has always wondered what happened to him after the Communists took over. He and Koreen married in July of 1947 and have 7 children. He was one of the first farmers to raise alfalfa.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Dr. Tom Milroy

Tom grew up in Saskatchewan, Canada. His uncle Tom ran away and enlisted in the Canadian Army during World War 1; he was killed at Passchendaele, Belgium in 1917. Tom was born two years later, and his name is no coincidence. His uncle Ernest was a physician, which impacted Tom's career choice. When war broke out in 1939 Tom enlisted in the local reserve artillery regiment. Even after he enrolled in college he thought he might be drafted. However, Canada had experienced a shortage of doctors after World War 1 - many died in the European trenches - and it reacted differently. Tom was told that his patriotic duty was to remain in college and to obtain a medical degree. He entered active Army duty in January of 1943, his 3rd year of medicine. "We were in the Army but kind of on leave." After the War ended he was assigned to a discharge board where he performed thorough medical exams on returning soldiers. He finally received his basic training in January of 1946 and was again posted at a discharge board. "Very monotonous thing." His first opportunity to act as a physician - morning sick call and camp inspections - was at Camp Dundurn, Saskatchewan. He worked at a Veteran's Hospital. Each ward had groups of Pacific veterans - paraplegics, dysentery, malaria, etc. Many were "barely alive." He was a physician for many years. He has six children, is now married to Sandy, and loves to compete in sports!

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



John Brady

John's Grandfather Brady was a Chicago police officer and, due to the corruption, he moved his family to Jefferson, SD. John was born in Worthing in 1923. His father was in banking, but the Depression took its toll. John graduated from Yankton High School in 1941 and worked his spare time at Drier's Creamery.

He and 3 friends hitchhiked to California that fall. They lost their money as a result of a trespassing charge in Wyoming. They arrived penniless. Brady enlisted in the Navy. The Japanese plan to defend Okinawa called for suicide attacks. An April 12, 1945 attack consisted of 175 kamikaze planes. Brady, who was aboard the USS Zellars, a destroyer, will never forget that day. The Zellars was in the picket screening the USS Tennessee near Le Shima. 3 Japanese planes arrived. Every ship fired their guns. Brady's gun station was located right under the 5" guns. The first 2 kamikazes were downed, but the third plane crashed port side. The plane tore through several bulkheads and exploded on the starboard side. John was on the fantail on the starboard side. "I felt it." There was lots of smoke and fire. "I got shrapnel all over my body." He graduated from Saint Joseph's College located in Rensselaer, Indiana and was ordained in Sioux Falls in 1956. His secret passion is California. "I love it."

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Lloyd Seger

Lloyd's parents married in Wausau, NE in 1917. They raised 4 children. Lloyd attended rural school for 8 years and graduated from Wausau High School in 1942. If times got bad you "made your belt a little tighter." He still had some fond memories of the 1930s. He had a dog that enjoyed cotton candy. The

War impacted him greatly. His first cousin Gilbert Seger died in Italy on October 18, 1943. He and a friend were interested in the Navy's V-5 program but his eyesight was poor. Instead he continued to farm, including 40 acres on his own. He was drafted in late 1944. After he arrived in boot camp at Camp Fannin, the trainers made known to everyone that he took all of his profits and purchased bonds. The European War ended while he was in training, and he figured he would be sent to the Pacific. He left out of California on his way to the Philippines. His first day out the first bomb was dropped. By the time he arrived, the War was over. He would have been a 32nd Division replacement. He drove truck but ended up as a cook's helper. A typhoon rattled his ship on the way to Sasebo, Japan. Instead of transfer to the 24th Division when the 32nd went home, he transferred to the 5th Air Force. He was a baker. He couldn't bake when he got home in October of 1946 because the pans were too small! He married Muriel Berner on October 5, 1958 and they raised 3 daughters.

Tom, Dick & Harry in the Big One



Bill Lynch

For many years, Bill was known for his athletic prowess at Yankton High School. He was only half joking when asked why he was so interested in sports and he replied, “They had showers!” Bill’s mother raised five children after her husband died. “How she survived I don’t know.” After graduating in 1943, Bill was drafted into the Army. Boot camp joined people “from all walks of life.” A word of advice – “never volunteer. You might end up on KP!” The USS General A.E. Anderson took Bill to Italy. As a replacement in the 3rd Division, he landed at Anzio. It was horrible. The Germans controlled the air and the beach. Death was everywhere. The nights were cold and, with his feet always in water, he developed trench foot. After a stay in a Naples hospital, Bill participated in the southern France invasion. He landed near St. Tropez, and was a lead scout in a recon unit known as Division Battle Patrol. His foot problems returned and he was sent to Livorno where he worked in the 7th Station Hospital. Bill was on his way to the Pacific, but, near the Straights of Gibraltar, the ship was re-directed to New York City because the War ended. The ship was greeted with huge cheers and he claimed in jest, “Everyone had a girl to kiss but me!” He and Alice Stevens raised five athletic sons. Bill, a tremendous fisherman, jokes that he is still the SD record holder for the smallmouth Buffalo.

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Joe Reynolds

Smiling Joe Reynolds, a 17-year old Yankton kid standing at the bus depot, had lipstick on him. The girls said "good-bye" to all of the recent enlistees. It was "a happy time." He had seen tougher times. His Aunt and Uncle adopted his 9-month old sister, and his father died when he was 10. "We were pretty poor." He enlisted in the

Navy because there wasn't much else going on. His mother consented and off he went to Camp Farragut. He was assigned to a water distiller, the USS Pasig, and shipped out on March 3, 1945, ultimately arriving at the Ulithi Atoll, the staging area for the Okinawa invasion. The Pasig was at Eniwetok preparing for the invasion of Japan when the War ended. One day, he was reading his mail, which included a recent copy of the Woksape, the Yankton school newspaper. That Woksape focused on Yankton kids in the service. A group of sub-chasers needed water, and Joe grabbed their lines as they arrived. He looked up and he saw Don Waters, one of those students! Spending Christmas in the hot Pacific made him homesick, so he "created" a tree out of wire, pipe cleaners, nuts, bolts, etc. His last duty was Operation Crossroads, two nuclear weapons tests in the Bikini Atoll in 1946. They towed a Japanese battleship into the drop zone, and then sailed straight home where Joe was discharged in July of 1946. He married Betty in 1955, and they raised two sons.

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