

Remembering Reno

This section is dedicated to *official, unbiased, and accurate* “After Action Reports” from the October 22-26, 2007 KWVA Convention in Reno. Remember, the 2008 Convention will be held in Norfolk, VA, dates to be determined. Rather than reading about what went on in the After Action Reports, though, why not attend and hear everything for yourself? Rumors and fabricated news from people who were not actually in attendance are a poor substitute for firsthand knowledge.

Tell America Program Report: National Convention

I am pleased to have this opportunity to bring you up to date on the Tell America program. Good things continue to happen, but I think we can do a lot better with something I propose and will get to in just a moment.

One of the very best things happened shortly after the meeting in San Antonio last year. You may remember that at the meeting I made a strong appeal to the Executive Board to help me replenish the 50th anniversary educational material that has been so useful to the chapters in their Tell America programs. I am pleased to say that several people came forward with help.

J.D. Randolph sent me several posters that he had; Warren Wiedhahn and Judith Knight both provided me with software that will allow us to get the posters reprinted if it ever becomes necessary. Immediate help came from Bob Desmond and Larry Sassorossi at the Korean War Veterans Museum in Springfield, IL. They provided me with 40 sets of each of the posters I was looking for and shipped them directly to me at no cost to the KWVA. They indicated there were more if I need them. My sincere thanks to all of these people who responded to my call for help.

I would like to ask a couple of questions.

- How many of you know what the Tell America program is?

- How many of you believe it is a good thing for chapters to help communities and schools know and understand what the Korean War was all about?

I am a little biased, but I believe it is one of the best and most rewarding things our chapters can do. Even though we didn't know it then, we accomplished historic and monumental successes 50 years ago,

and we need to talk about it. If we don't, who will?

Requests for the material have decreased, but I continue to hear from chapters that are interested in starting programs or getting the material to enhance what they are doing. Since last October I have sent out 50 packages of the posters and videos to chapters and schools across the country. We have done well with what we are doing, but I truly think we can do better and give the Tell America Program a boost by working through the State Departments.

I visited with President Dechert about this. He agreed that I could contact all the State Department Commanders and ask them to appoint a Tell America Chairman or someone in their state with whom I could work to encourage chapters to develop TA programs. I contacted the State Commanders earlier this year. To date, I have had very little response. Basically, nothing has happened to get this done. I would appreciate any thoughts from the Board or membership about getting this off the ground.

I am pleased to state that we have also made the *International* scene.

Back in July I received a letter from a member of the Greek Korean War Veterans organization, Demetrious Mastsoukas, the Special Secretary of the Panhellenic Korean Veterans Organization in Athens, Greece. He is not a Korean War veteran, but his brother was killed in October, 1951 in the Punch Bowl area.

He had read one of our *Greybeards* magazines and was interested in obtaining posters, maps and DVDs for their programs in Greece to set up a “Tell Greece” program about the Korean War. After checking to make sure he was legitimate, I sent him the material he requested. I

have established email communication with him, and we visit regularly through the internet.

Some of you may know that Greece provided over 5000 troops in Korea, and 186 of them were killed in the fighting. They feel very strongly about their contribution to the Korean War, and have erected a monument in Athens in recognition of those who died. At the end of September, they had a memorial service in Athens at which they displayed the posters and showed the DVDs I had sent. Demetrious also sent me a CD of their May, 2007 revisit trip to Korea—looked just like us.

It seems to me there is increasing public interest about the Korean War. Recently, I have received numerous requests from schools and individual students who want information about the war and want to interview veterans of the war for a research paper or a project they are working on. I have been able to satisfy all these requests so far.

In September, I received an email from Jonathan Hull, a former journalist for *Time* magazine, who has developed a website entitled “Were You There?” He states, “My hope is to enable and encourage a conversation about the moments in life that made a difference, for better or worse, and I'm especially interested in providing a forum for veterans. As a history buff, I'm frequently dismayed by the number of Americans who know next to nothing about the Korean War and the enormous price paid by U. S. troops, so I'm eager to make sure that the voices of Korean vets are represented at “Were You There?” The site is just getting started. Ultimately, I hope it will become a communal archive of sorts that is useful to students, researchers and historians.”

COMMITTEE MEMBER Jim Yaney is still working diligently with the Public Access TV station in Ft. Wayne, Indiana in the production of monthly shows on Channel 57 there. Jim recently received a letter from Indiana State Senator Gary Dillon expressing appreciation for his

“efforts to educate people on the Korean War and its veterans.” Their TV program has been entered in a contest for the “best program of the year” produced on Channel 57 and Comcast Cable Television.

Jim is currently working with Chapter 259 in central Indiana to get a Tell America program started there. As I mentioned earlier, we frequently get requests from students across the nation for veteran interviews or information about the Korean War. One such request came to me from a “Gifted Resource Teacher” in Henley Middle School in Virginia seeking information about the Chosin Reservoir for one of her students.

I asked Jim to contact her to see if he could assist. Jim helped their project by producing a TV show in which he interviewed several Chosin Few veterans and sent the DVD to the student for his project. It won 2nd place in the contest and caused Max (the student) to write an email thanking Jim for the effort.

In it, he stated, “It was hard to find the right words to thank him. But hopefully the best way was to show more people the bravery that soldiers and Marines at the Chosin Reservoir displayed. Putting your life on the line for your country is the noblest thing a man can do. The Chosin Reservoir really should go down in history alongside Bunker Hill, The Alamo, Gettysburg and D-Day.”

At present, Jim is working hard with Channel 57 to put together a major TV production for the Ft Wayne area [which was shown] on October 30. The program featured two Korean War veterans and two from WW II telling their experiences at the Chosin Reservoir and Iwo Jima. They expect[ed] 500-600 people to attend and anticipate[d] coverage by the local network TV stations. TA Chairman Chris Yanacos attend[ed] this program.

Committee Member Irving Breitbart tells me he [held] the Veterans Panel once again on November 8 at West Point. This [was] the 7th year he has done the program. The cadets really appreciate hearing from the veterans and being able to talk with them. He [had] at least 150 veterans there with him from the Central Long Island and Nassau & Staten Island Chapters, and some from his own Chapter 91. He says the New York chapters [were]

Ask the Secretary...

Do you have a request for information? Why not ask the KWVA Secretary? From time to time we will print members’ requests and Secretary Cohee’s responses. He may not be able to help in every request, but he will do his best to get answers.



I received a hand-written request from a member seeking information on whether a book has been written about his unit, the 89th Tank Bn., 25th Inf. Div. My response:

November 6, 2007
 Frank J Olsson
 56 Walnut St.
 Montclair, NJ 07042

Dear Mr. Olsson:

I searched the web site for both the 25th Inf Div and the 89th Med Tank Bn. There is a lot of information on that site including a complete history of the 89th Tank Bn, but there is no mention of any books. If you have access to a computer, you can type in “25th Inf Div” in the Google search site and it will take you to their home page with a link to the 89th. If you do not have access to a computer, I suggest you write to the 25th Inf Div Association. I am enclosing a copy of their home page which contains their mailing address.

Hopefully, they will be able to answer your question as to whether or not there have been any written. As a minimum, they should be able to provide you with a history of the 89th.

Good luck and best regards.

Frank Cohee
 National Secretary, KWVA



Today, I received a reply from Mr. Olsson and this is what he wrote:

Dear Sir:

Thank you very much for the address and info you sent me to locate the history of the unit I served in Korea. I am now in the process of finding someone who may help me in the search for my unit’s history. Your info is the key and very valuable to me.

Much Regards.
 /s/ Frank Olsson

invited to visit a ROK Navy ship due in the area around November 2. Tom McHugh [coordinated] this effort.

I want to put in a good word for another couple of dedicated veterans in Western Ohio Chapter 108. Fred Shively and Ken Williamson recently provided me with a summary and pictures covering their visits in this last school year and what they have done. They spoke to over 3500 students, 250 teachers and guests, and traveled 2267 miles. These guys are doing a great job in that area.

Bottom line—I feel strongly that we are making a difference in the schools and communities with the Tell America Programs that are active around the coun-

try, and it reflects very positively on the Korean War Veterans Association. I have been impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication that most of the veterans show when they call to talk about what they are doing.

However, I think we can do a much better job if we can get the State Departments to support the program by having someone to promote the Tell America Program on a more local basis. I would appreciate hearing from the State Department Commanders about this proposal.

Thank you.

Larry Kinard