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Marine Sergeant Milo Adamson is a WWII Veteran who served in the Pacific, taking part in the 3rd wave on D-Day at Iwo Jima and in the Korean War. Milo is a resident in the patio homes at Martha Franks.

Veterans Salute

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The Clinton Chronicle – SECTION 1

June 25, 2014



We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do hereby adopt this Constitution for the United States of America.

KEN ALLMAN
EARL L. ANDERSON
JOHN ANDERSON
WILLIAM ARTHUR
MELISA AUSTIN
JOSEPH BATTLE
VICTORIA BEST
JOHN NEWTON BELL
BRANDON BLACKS
CHRISTOPHER BLACKS
SETH BLACKWELL
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JACOB BOYD
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BOBBY BRYANT
MATTHEW BRYANT
DANNY BURROUGHS
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NOEL WILSON

CAROLINA HEALTH CENTERS SALUTES ALL INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE SERVED AND ARE SERVING OUR COUNTRY. TO SHOW OUR APPRECIATION, WE HONOR AND RECOGNIZE EMPLOYEES AND THEIR LOVED ONES WHO HAVE MADE PERSONAL SACRIFICES FOR OUR FREEDOMS.

THANK YOU!



Laurens County's military heritage is on display three times a year - May for Memorial Day, September for the Hall of Heroes, and November for Veterans Day. But throughout the years, activities in Clinton, Laurens and around Laurens County feature tributes to and activities for veterans and military families. Laurens County Veterans Affairs maintains benefits information for veterans from its office at the historic courthouse in Laurens, where the county's war memorials are located. County has been approached about funding and locating a place for a new monument to honor each branch of the nation's military service. The VA Office and a coordinating committee are in the process of forming a not-for-profit organization that can accept contributions to sustain and expand the Laurens County Hall of Heroes. National Guard units in Clinton and Laurens open their armories for activities and express appreciation to the county's First Responders and veterans. From the days before The Shot Heard Round the World to the modern-day combat in Iraq and Afghanistan, the nation's longest war, with 1.3 million lives given in 62 major conflicts, the United States military stands strong - and Laurens County honors its soldiers, sailors, airmen and women, Marines and Guardsmen, and their families

- Photos by Vic MacDonald



A morning walk along the seashore at Normandy, France

(Ernie Pyle became history's greatest war correspondent. He was killed by a Japanese machine gun bullet on the tiny Pacific island of Ie Shima in 1945)

NORMANDY BEACHHEAD, June 16, 1944 – I took a walk along the historic coast of Normandy in the country of France.

It was a lovely day for strolling along the seashore. Men were sleeping on the sand, some of them sleeping forever. Men were floating in the water, but they didn't know they were in the water, for they were dead.

The water was full of squishy little jellyfish about the size of your hand. Millions of them. In the center each of them had a green design exactly like a four-leaf clover. The good-luck emblem. Sure. Hell yes.

I walked for a mile and a half along the water's edge of our many-miled invasion beach. You wanted to walk slowly, for the detail on that beach was infinite.

The wreckage was vast and startling. The awful waste and destruction of war, even aside from the loss of human life, has always been one of its outstanding features to those who are in it. Anything and everything is expendable. And we did expend on our beachhead in Normandy during those first few hours.

For a mile out from the beach there were scores of tanks and trucks and boats that you could no longer see, for they were



Ernie Pyle

at the bottom of the water – swamped by overloading, or hit by shells, or sunk by mines. Most of their crews were lost.

You could see trucks tipped half over and swamped. You could see partly sunken barges, and the angled-up corners of jeeps, and small landing craft half submerged. And at low tide you could still see those vicious six-pronged iron snares that helped snag and wreck them.

On the beach itself, high and dry, were

all kinds of wrecked vehicles. There were tanks that had only just made the beach before being knocked out. There were jeeps that had been burned to a dull gray. There were big derricks on caterpillar treads that didn't quite make it. There were half-tracks carrying office equipment that had been made into a shambles by a single shell hit, their interiors still holding their useless equipage of smashed typewriters, telephones, office files.

There were LCT's turned completely upside down, and lying on their backs, and how they got that way I don't know. There were boats stacked on top of each other, their sides caved in, their suspension doors knocked off.

In this shoreline museum of carnage there were abandoned rolls of barbed wire and smashed bulldozers and big stacks of thrown-away lifebelts and piles of shells still waiting to be moved.

In the water floated empty life rafts and soldiers' packs and ration boxes, and mysterious oranges.

On the beach lay snarled rolls of telephone wire and big rolls of steel matting and stacks of broken, rusting rifles.

On the beach lay, expended, sufficient men and mechanism for a small war. They were gone forever now. And yet we could afford it.

We could afford it because we were on, we had our foothold, and behind us there were such enormous replacements for this

wreckage on the beach that you could hardly conceive of their sum total. Men and equipment were flowing from England in such a gigantic stream that it made the waste on the beachhead seem like nothing at all, really nothing at all.

A few hundred yards back on the beach is a high bluff. Up there we had a tent hospital, and a barbed-wire enclosure for prisoners of war. From up there you could see far up and down the beach, in a spectacular crow's-nest view, and far out to sea.

And standing out there on the water beyond all this wreckage was the greatest armada man has ever seen. You simply could not believe the gigantic collection of ships that lay out there waiting to unload.

Looking from the bluff, it lay thick and clear to the far horizon of the sea and beyond, and it spread out to the sides and was miles wide. Its utter enormity would move the hardest man.

As I stood up there I noticed a group of freshly taken German prisoners standing nearby. They had not yet been put in the prison cage. They were just standing there, a couple of doughboys leisurely guarding them with tommy guns.

The prisoners too were looking out to sea – the same bit of sea that for months and years had been so safely empty before their gaze. Now they stood staring almost as if in a trance.

They didn't say a word to each other. They didn't need to. The expression on their faces was something forever unforgettable. In it was the final horrified acceptance of their doom.

If only all Germans could have had the rich experience of standing on the bluff and looking out across the water and seeing what their compatriots saw.

Permission to distribute and re-publish Ernie Pyle's columns was given by the Scripps Howard Foundation.

Information on the Ernie Pyle World War II Museum

The Ernie Pyle World War II Museum features the famous journalist's birthplace and a museum dedicated to Pyle's life and writings as a war correspondent. It is owned by the Friends of Ernie Pyle, who are dedicated to preserving and expanding the legacy of the writer whose columns linked the soldiers on the front line to worried families on the home front. To preserve Ernie Pyle's memory is to preserve the sacrifices made by what has been dubbed "The Greatest Generation."

To learn more about the Ernie Pyle World War II Museum located in Dana, Indiana, or make a donation to assist the efforts of the Friends of Ernie Pyle to honor him and that generation, go to www.erniepyle.org.

John Uldrick -- U.S. Army, Korea

By Larry Franklin

For Vet Salute 2014

At 6-5, he felt like he would have been an easy target for the Viet Cong snipers.

So John Uldrick, who was born in Clinton and grew up here, was relieved when he was sent to Korea instead of Vietnam. "Had that not happened, I'd probably not be here today," he said.

After graduating from Clinton High School in 1962, Uldrick attended Presbyterian College. He had quit school to make money working so he could go back to school when he was drafted in 1968 – the height of the Vietnam War.

American military advisors began arriving in Vietnam (then called French Indochina) in 1950. During the late 1960s, American troop strength was over 500,000.

After basic training at Fort Jackson, Uldrick was sent to Fort Polk, La., for Vietnam training. He was in the infantry and looked destined to be sent to the war in which 58,000 members of the U.S. military died.

But, since Uldrick's older brother Bob was serving in Vietnam – not on the front-line – John Uldrick received a deferment. Bob Uldrick died three years ago from COPD caused by exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam, his younger brother said.

John Uldrick was sent to Korea in January, 1969. When he got there, the first sergeant called four names – including Uldrick's. Those four soldiers were to become members of the Eighth United States Army Honor Guard.

One of the three requirements was the Honor Guard members had to be at least six feet tall. They also had to have received infantry training and have a better than average IQ.

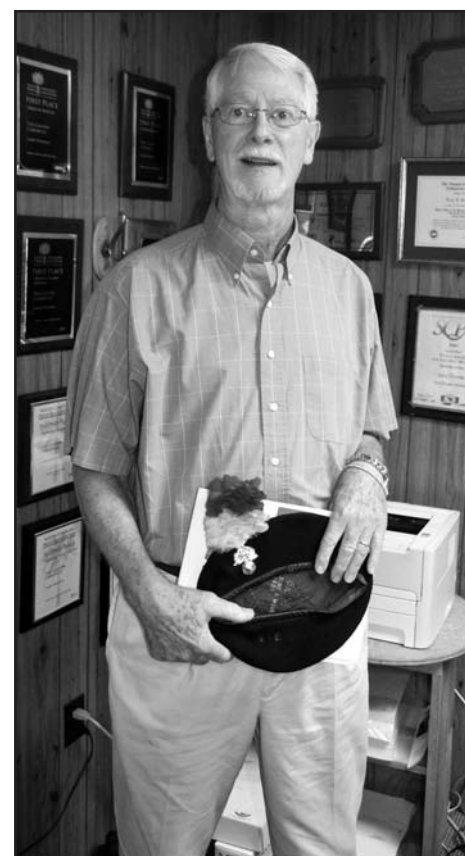
The Honor Guard company was made up of soldiers from the United States, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Thailand, Great Britain and Turkey.

The company provided security for the Commander in Chief, the Eighth United States United Nations Command and United Force in Korea and also provided ceremonial guard for visiting dignitaries.

Part of the duties were to provide 24-hour armed security to the Eighth Army general's house, walking the perimeter in eight-hour shifts. They also provided security at the main headquarters building at the HQ base in Seoul.

The Honor Guard could also be deployed as an infantry rifle company. A very tall infantry rifle company.

Members of the Honor Guard had to march in a certain, precise fashion. "You couldn't bounce," Uldrick said. "I bounced." So he also spent time in the supply room



Military service in Korea. John Uldrick, 6'-5", says he would've made an easy target for enemy snipers had he served in Vietnam. The Clinton resident was stationed in Korea at the height of the Vietnam War. - Photo by Vic MacDonald

as a supply clerk ordering blankets, shoes, uniforms and other things the soldiers needed.

Uldrick was in Korea for 13 months. During that time, his company went on a two-week maneuver "out in the boonies," sleeping in tents and training for combat.

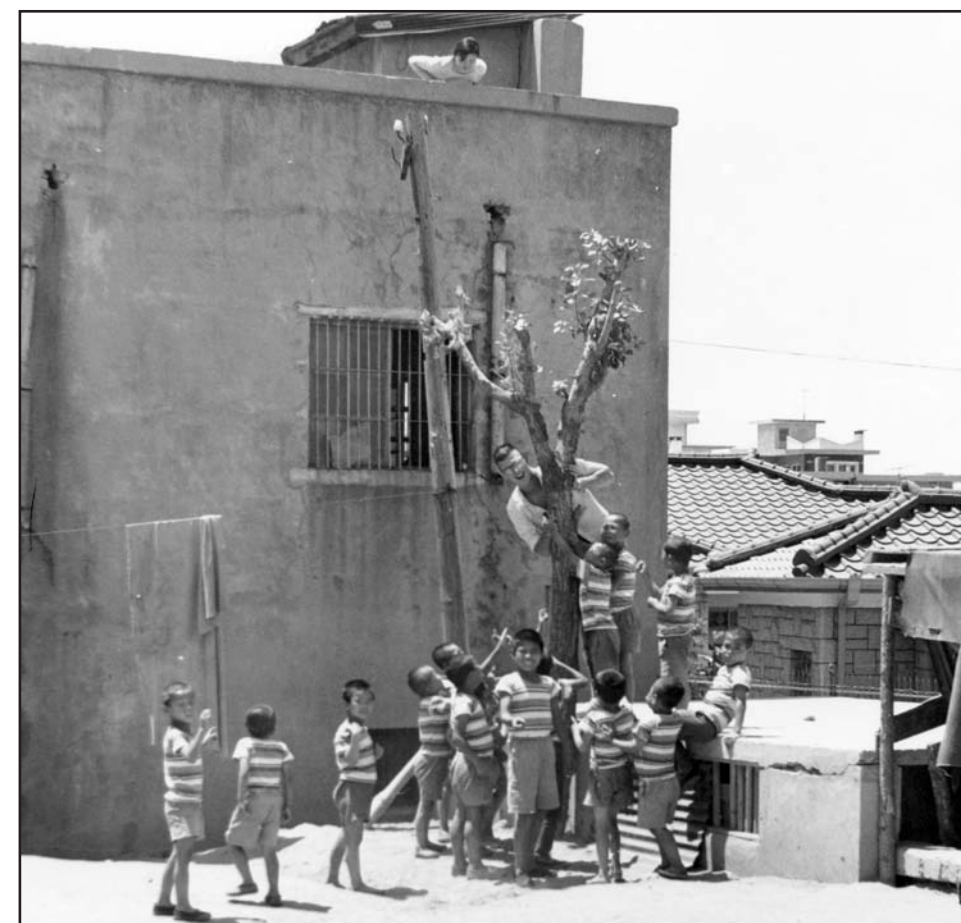
He visited the DMZ (de-militarized zone) once and looked over the fence to see North Korean soldiers with weapons looking back at him.

While in Korea, Uldrick became good friends with Bill Johnson from Carrollton, Georgia. The men have remained in touch and the two families have camped and vacationed together over the years.

Uldrick left the Army after his two-year commitment (draftees had to serve only two years) and came back to Clinton.

He had worked at Jacobs Press in Clinton while in school – beginning in 1962 – and continued a career at the local printing company that would last until Jacobs Press closed in 1996. At the time, Uldrick was the plant superintendent.

Before going to Korea, Uldrick became engaged to Connie King of Clinton. "I gave her a diamond so she'd wait for me," he said.



While stationed in Korea, John Uldrick (shown climbing the tree) and his fellow soldiers provided food, clothing and blankets to a nearby orphanage. -- Photo provided

While he was in Korea, Connie sent him The Chronicle. One issue – with a picture of Virginia Rogers (now McMurray) who was Miss Clinton – drew the attention of the Thai soldiers in his company.

They wrote to someone connected with the pageant asking for a photo of Rogers. They received the photo soon after.

Connie King grew up in the Bush River community and her family moved to Clinton when he father died in 1963. Uldrick and King were married in May, 1970.

Over the years, Connie worked for M.S. Bailey and Son, Bankers, the Bailey Insurance Agency, David Ramage's Allstate Agency and in January retired from Matt Davis' State Farm Agency in Clinton.

After Jacobs closed, John Uldrick worked for 14 years at the R.L. Bryan printing plant in Columbia.

The Uldricks have two children. John Hagen is the minister of youth and missions at the First Baptist Church of Rome, Georgia. He and his wife, the former Jennifer Charles of Clinton, have two children. Jennifer works for a school district in Rome, teaching teachers to teach, Uldrick said.

Lucia Uldrick Higgins lives in Winston-Salem, N.C., and is director of admissions for Salem Academy, a boarding school for

girls. Higgins and her husband Gabe just recently purchased a 9-hole golf course that he wants to turn into a retirement center/community, complete with doctors, a drug store and everything needed to make it self-contained.

Now that he's retired, John Uldrick has more time to indulge his passion for painting.

He is self taught except for a few watercolor courses he took from William Jacobs, who at the time was co-owner of Jacobs Press.

Uldrick joined The Artist Coop in Laurens in 2003 and occasionally instructs a class there. He also shows and displays his work

He creates in acrylic, watercolor and pencil. His favorite is watercolor, but he said lately he's doing more acrylic work.

Uldrick has had one 1-man show in which he displayed 30-40 pieces he had painted.

"I do it mostly for relaxation," he said. "Sometimes you get requests and then you are doing it to sell."

The Uldricks have around 10 of his paintings in their house. "There are many in the house that Connie just won't let go," he said.



Saluting the United States veterans. Participants in the June 8 - 14 Palmetto Girls State at Presbyterian College place stars with their names on a banner honoring the veterans of United States military service. A program sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary, Girls State includes an activity for the 600 young women delegates that explains The Poppy, symbol of America's wartime sacrifice made by disabled veterans and given out by Auxiliary members on Memorial Day for donations that benefit rehabilitation and services offered to disabled veterans. The Poppy dates from the Flanders Fields of Europe in WWI as a symbol of remembrance for those who have fallen during wars. - Photo by Vic MacDonald

Edgar Shelton -- U.S. Army, Vietnam

By Vic MacDonald

For Vet Salute 2014

Edgar Shelton of Clinton credits his military service with paving the way for a 34-year career with the United States Postal Service and a side business in photography.

Anyone who attends veterans activities, especially Veterans Day and Memorial Day observances, and the outreach programs of VFW Post 5932 sees Shelton.

He's the man with the digital camera around his neck, often posing groups so he can take three "bracketed" photos. But never on "automatic" - "That's for rookies," Shelton says.

A Bell Street High School graduate, Shelton joined the Army out of high school, and served in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne, 325th Infantry. He was supposed to be assigned to the 173rd.

The 101st lost so many soldiers, command officers and radio operators in Vietnam fighting that other units' personnel were tapped for this elite and legendary fighting group. Shelton was a radio operator.

"The commanders and radio operators that were killed were strapped to trees (by the enemy) and the trees were booby-trapped with our own explosives," Shelton recalls.

Try to remove the body of a fellow U.S. serviceman from the wires binding the body to the tree, that trips the wire that causes the explosive placed up in the tree to detonate.

The tree and everyone around it is vaporized.

These, and many more, horrors are what the American service personnel serving in Vietnam lived with everyday. Shelton served in 1968-69, decided not to re-enlist, obtained college degrees through the G.I. Bill of the Vietnam Era, and joined the Postal Service.

Always living in Clinton, he was a clerk in Greenville, then Postmaster in Donalds for 10 years and Postmaster in the fast-moving post office in Roebuck for nine years. Shelton mailed out the postal route that today goes through the Dorman High School campus.

"It is one mile - exactly one mile - from the freshman center to the high school," he says of the university-like campus near Spartanburg.

"I commuted my whole career," said Shelton, who after seven or eight years tired of the clerk job, 11:30 p.m. to 8 a.m., and applied for Postmaster positions, taking an extremely challenging test and getting boots-on-the-ground experience with other Postmasters.

In Roebuck, he started taking advantage of a 90-minute lunch break to fulfill the assignments of a photography class he was



The Cameraman. Edgar Shelton takes a break from taking photos to have his photo made at The Chronicle office. Shelton spent a tour in Vietnam, then used that era's G.I. Bill to obtain college degrees and further his future with the United States Postal Service as a professional photographer. - Photo by Vic MacDonald

taking.

"In Vietnam I had a camera and took pictures of my comrades on R&R. Here, I take pictures for the VFW. I went to school for it," Shelton said. "I learned everything I needed to know at The Art Museum in Greenville in a two-year course. We were doing film then, our instructor would give us assignments. I would go out on my lunch break, drive around and find a subject in somebody's yard, go to the house and knock on the door and ask, 'Can I take a picture?' Then we would develop the film at The Art Museum."

Learning about apertures, film speeds and shutter speed, and how to "push" film in the developing process has given way to the digital age.

Still, Shelton said he is more comfortable shooting a group on aperture priority, so he can get depth of field, than setting his camera on "auto".

"A guy at the Memorial Day service asked me if I shoot on 'auto'. I told him, 'No'," Shelton said. "You can see it on their

face if they know what you're talking about. Something that's taken me two years to learn, you just can't explain that in a minute."

Shelton said his friends gave him grief for shooting the photos of his daughter Anita's wedding. Except for the walking down the aisle and the giving-away photos - shot on his camera by the wedding directress - Shelton shot about 300 photos that day.

"It is something special she can remember - my dad took these pictures," Shelton said, "and it is very special for me, as well."

Shelton has a lot of post-shooting work to do right now. In the past few weeks he has shot VFW, auxiliary members and others placing flags on veterans' graves, the Memorial Day observance in uptown Clinton (May 26), Memorial Day lunch at Bailey Manor, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars state convention in Columbia.

Shelton and others from Post 5932 head out to St. Louis next month for the National Convention.

"I like working with the community," he

said.

He has had a business license since 1981 for his photography work. "When you're doing business with the public," he said, "you need to have a license."

Much of this "do things the right way" attitude, Shelton says, comes from his military service. "As a radio operator, our work was very important. We called in supplies for the troops, monitored the radios at night in case of an ambush, and we were the first line (rear guard commanders) contacted to talk to the company commanders."

Shelton earned sergeant rank during his time in Vietnam. His decorations are Bronze Star, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and Bronze Star attachment, Combat Infantrymen Badge 1st Award, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon with device, Sharpshooter Badge and Auto Rifle Bar, Marksman Badge and Machine Gun Bar and Rifle Bar, and the Parachutist Badge.

Shelton retired from the Postal Service in 2007, and now he says his military service combined with years in the Postal Service provide him a retirement in which he is able to travel with the VFW and work as a service officer and Post Trustee.

"I think I went the right way," he says of the choice between an Army career and moving on after serving in Vietnam. He said he did encounter the American public's Vietnam "backlash" but feels the U.S. government did what it could to help through the Hire-A-Vet program.

Shelton said young people should consider a military option coming out of high school.

"If you cannot afford school, or your parents cannot afford to send you to college, look into the military," he advises young people. And not only for education benefits - "I could have stayed in Clinton and hung my with old crowd, been on the streets. Who knows where I would be now, if I had done that."

"Look down the road - 20 or 30 years from now. Everything you do now will determine that" - a future career and path in life, Shelton said.

Shelton understands the concerns today about military service, and spending time in combat but, he adds, "There are options."

Through the VFW service office, he has direct contact with today's Afghanistan and Iraq returning veterans - and expresses the utmost respect for those men and women.

"The guys now have two or three tours. That is rough on families. It's hard to keep a family together like that."

But, the Vietnam vet adds, through lessons learned in military service, "You get in a position to do something with your life."

For Shiflet, the war had humor, human moments

By Vic MacDonald

For Vet Salute 2014

All war is bad, Laurens Second Baptist Church pastor Rev. J.D. Shiflet says. But looking through the prism of 40 years, Shiflet says some humor stands out.

"We had a guy with us from Texas. He was an atheist. He jumped up out of the fox hole and says, 'I ain't scared, I ain't scared.' A sniper shot him right in the fanny. And he was rolling around, 'Oh, my God! Oh, my God!'"

"I told him, 'Hey, I thought you didn't believe in God.'"

Believing in God, and showing the power of what that belief can do in a person's life, is J.D. and Sandra Shiflet's mission these days for the congregation of Second Baptist.

Shiflet directs morning and evening services every Sunday at the Fleming Street church, and prayer meeting every Wednesday night. Second Baptist had Vacation Bible School last week. Sandra sings in the Second Baptist Choir, directing some times. They are incredibly proud of their three children and embrace a houseful of grandchildren.

The congregation the Shiflets' serve ranges in age from a to-be-born-soon child to regularly-attending members over 80-years-old.

They all get a grin now and then from J.D. Shiflet's wry sense of humor.

When he discharged from the Marines, after a time in Okinawa - "a miserable place" - and Camp Pendleton, Calif. - "a beautiful



Platoon commander. Young J.D. Shiflet was promoted to corporal and led a platoon in Vietnam for the U.S. Marines. He serves now as pastor of Second Baptist Church in Laurens. - Photo provided

base" - the not-yet-21 Shiflet was anxious to get back to Sandra in South Carolina.

"We took a taxi to the Los Angeles airport, we had that taxi driver doing 100 miles-an-hour. I did not tell her (he was coming home). I couldn't get a flight from Greenville to Anderson so I took a taxi, then I called her to pick me up at the taxi stand. She thought it

Continued From Page 7

while he was in Vietnam. A chaplain gave him a Bible, but he says reading from the beginning, he got frustrated by all the genealogy - he put the book aside.

After he left Vietnam, returning to South Carolina and back to wife Sandra, he attended the Friday night session of the Anderson County Crusade.

"This was just a year after my Conviction, and I was still really shy," he said. "I did not want to be a minister. I told God I would be a missionary, or a youth minister."

God did not respond. Shiflet said he was saved that Friday night in Anderson, but he still negotiated about how his life would turn out.

He entered the ministry in 1972. He was a youth minister for two years and has been a pastor ever since. He and Sandra served a church in Hemingway, SC; Shiflet was asked by a church member, the principal at Pamplico High School, to speak at Veterans Day.

was my brother (calling).

"She finally came."

Meanwhile, Shiflet had fallen asleep in the taxi, and driver decided to drive around a while to run up the meter. "He ran me around in circles, I got another taxi. He said, 'You have to pay.' I told him, 'You better get on outta here.'"

"I was in Atlanta (airport) and wanted to get a haircut. I was in the chair and looked up on the wall. Four dollars! I said, 'Let me out of here.'"

"Four dollars, for a haircut," Shiflet shakes his head.

Shiflet says his best friend in-country was Dempsey W. Tucker - think Bubba in the "Forrest Gump" movie - from Memphis. Tucker was the squad's radioman - "He stepped on a booby trap, that I stepped over. He blew up, I told him, 'Tucker, you done done it this time. You messed up the radio. How are we going to get a medivac in here?'"

"We set off all the colored smoke grenades at once, and a helicopter pilot saw it. Tucker was rubbing soot (from the exploded grenade) all over me. I said, 'Tucker, what are you doing?'"

"Making you black."

"Making me black, why?'"

"Tucker said, 'Looks like I'm going home. You can come hang out with me, if you're black.' I got a letter from Tucker's sister, she said he has a permanent limp. That was 1968, the year Martin Luther King Jr. was killed (at a Memphis motel)."

Once Shiflet and his men were on a mission to run Viet Cong out of a jungle, and command ordered gas bombs to be dropped

on the enemy before they went in.

"The gas was to run them out, but it didn't work. The Viet Cong had gas masks."

"But it ran out the monkeys - thousands and thousands of monkeys, running right at us."

There were plenty of serious times in Vietnam. At least twice, Shiflet said, lieutenants ordered him to transport by vehicle along heavily-mined Highway One. "I told them, 'I am not telling my men to do that. You won't make it.' They threatened us with court-martial, their vehicles blew up."

"We had been in-country a year. We knew what to do. (They thought) their rank was more important than our knowledge."

Shiflet says his squad had a "friendly fire" incident, when another squad commander had his troops 2,000 meters out of position. Four Americans were killed - "We stopped firing, when we heard them talking. The lieutenant (of the other squad) was court-martialled."

Also, there were the miracles.

"I was talking to a guy and a bullet hits him dead center in his helmet. The bullet followed the liner of the helmet, across the top and down the back. It burned his back."


Back in the States, the young veterans found a strange culture. "By the time we got out we were old men. I was 20. I went to buy a car - I had cash, I had sent all that (combat pay) money home. I didn't need any money except maybe \$10, for a Coke - the guy said I had to be 21. My brother-in-law had to buy the car."

Shiflet says, "It's like a collage, after 40 years it mixes together. There are things you don't ever forget."



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you

for your service & sacrifice


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The greatest correspondent for the greatest generation

(The son of a tenant farming parents in west-central Indiana, Ernie Pyle became history's greatest war correspondent. When Pyle was killed by a Japanese machine gun bullet on the tiny Pacific island of Ie Shima in 1945, his columns were being delivered to more than 14 million homes, according to his New York Times obituary. During the war, Pyle wrote about the hardships and bravery of the common soldier, not grand strategy. His description of the G.I.'s life was more important to families on the home front than battlefield tactics of Gens. Dwight Eisenhower, Douglas MacArthur, George Patton or Omar Bradley. Prior to the United States' entry into World War II, Pyle traveled to England and wrote about the Nazi's continual bombing of London. His columns helped move the mood of America from isolationism to sympathy for the stubborn refusal of Great Britain to succumb to the will of Adolf Hitler. The Pulitzer Prize winning journalist's legacy rests in his words and the impact they had on Americans before and during a war that threatened to take the world behind a curtain of fascism. His columns open a window to the hardships endured by the common U.S. soldier during World War II and serve today to honor what has been called "The Greatest Generation.")



Ernie Pyle

entailed, so that you can know and appreciate and forever be humbly grateful to those both dead and alive who did it for you.

Ashore, facing us, were more enemy troops than we had in our assault waves. The advantages were all theirs, the disadvantages all ours. The Germans were dug into positions that they had been working on for months, although these were not yet all complete. A one-hundred-foot bluff a couple of hundred yards back from the beach had great concrete gun emplacements built right into the hilltop. These opened to the sides instead of to the front, thus making it very hard for naval fire from the sea to reach them. They could shoot parallel with the beach and cover every foot of it for miles with artillery fire.

Then they had hidden machine-gun nests on the forward slopes, with crossfire taking in every inch of the beach. These nests were connected by networks of trenches, so that the German gunners could move about without exposing themselves.

Throughout the length of the beach, running zigzag a couple of hundred yards back from the shoreline, was an immense V-shaped ditch fifteen feet deep. Nothing could cross it, not even men on foot, until fills had been made. And in other places at the far end of the beach, where the ground is flatter, they had great concrete walls. These were blasted by our naval gunfire or by explosives set by hand after we got ashore.

Our only exits from the beach were several swales or valleys, each about one hundred yards wide. The Germans made the most of these funnel-like traps, sowing them with buried mines. They contained, also, barbed-wire entanglements with mines attached, hidden ditches, and machine guns firing from the slopes.

This is what was on the shore. But our men had to go through a maze nearly as deadly as this before they even got ashore. Underwater

obstacles were terrific. The Germans had whole fields of evil devices under the water to catch our boats. Even now, several days after the landing, we have cleared only channels through them and cannot yet approach the whole length of the beach with our ships. Even now some ship or boat hits one of these mines every day and is knocked out of commission.

The Germans had masses of those great six-pronged spiders, made of railroad iron and standing shoulder-high, just beneath the surface of the water for our landing craft to run into. They also had huge logs buried in the sand, pointing upward and outward, their tops just below the water. Attached to these logs were mines.

In addition to these obstacles they had floating mines offshore, land mines buried in the sand of the beach, and more mines in checkerboard rows in the tall grass beyond the sand. And the enemy had four men on shore for every three men we had approaching the shore.

And yet we got on. Beach landings are planned to a schedule that is set far ahead of time. They all have to be timed, in order for everything to mesh and for the following waves of troops to be standing off the beach and ready to land at the right moment.

As the landings are planned, some elements of the assault force are to break through quickly, push on inland, and attack the most obvious enemy strong points. It is usually the plan for units to be inland, attacking gun positions from behind, within a matter of minutes after the first men hit the beach.

I have always been amazed at the speed called for in these plans. You'll have schedules calling for engineers to land at H-hour plus two minutes, and service troops at H-hour plus thirty minutes, and even for press censors to land at H-hour plus seventy-five minutes. But in the attack on this special portion of the beach where I am – the worst we had, incidentally – the schedule didn't hold.

Our men simply could not get past the beach. They were pinned down right on the water's edge by an inhuman wall of fire from the bluff. Our first waves were on that beach for hours, instead of a few minutes, before they could begin working inland.

You can still see the foxholes they dug at the very edge of the water, in the sand and the small, jumbled rocks that form parts of the beach. Medical corpsmen attended the wounded as best they could. Men were killed as they stepped out of landing craft. An officer whom I knew got a bullet through the head just as the door of his landing craft was let down. Some men were drowned.

The first crack in the beach defenses was finally accomplished by terrific and wonderful naval gunfire, which knocked out the big emplacements. They tell epic stories of de-

stroyers that ran right up into shallow water and had it out point-blank with the big guns in those concrete emplacements ashore.

When the heavy fire stopped, our men were organized by their officers and pushed on inland, circling machine-gun nests and taking them from the rear.

As one officer said, the only way to take a beach is to face it and keep going. It is costly at first, but it's the only way. If the men are pinned down on the beach, dug in and out of action, they might as well not be there at all. They hold up the waves behind them, and nothing is being gained.

Our men were pinned down for a while, but finally they stood up and went through, and so we took that beach and accomplished our landing. We did it with every advantage on the enemy's side and every disadvantage on ours. In the light of a couple of days of retrospection, we sit and talk and call it a miracle that our men ever got on at all or were able to stay on.

Before long it will be permitted to name the units that did it. Then you will know to whom this glory should go. They suffered casualties. And yet if you take the entire beach-head assault, including other units that had a much easier time, our total casualties in driving this wedge into the continent of Europe were remarkably low – only a fraction, in fact, of what our commanders had been prepared to accept.

And these units that were so battered and went through such hell are still, right at this moment, pushing on inland without rest, their spirits high, their egotism in victory almost reaching the smart-alecky stage.

Their tails are up. "We've done it again," they say. They figure that the rest of the army isn't needed at all. Which proves that, while their judgment in this regard is bad, they certainly have the spirit that wins battles and eventually wars.

Permission to distribute and re-publish Ernie Pyle's columns was given by the Scripps Howard Foundation.

Information on the Ernie Pyle World War II Museum

The Ernie Pyle World War II Museum features the famous journalist's birthplace and a museum dedicated to Pyle's life and writings as a war correspondent. It is owned by the Friends of Ernie Pyle, who are dedicated to preserving and expanding the legacy of the writer whose columns linked the soldiers on the front line to worried families on the home front. To preserve Ernie Pyle's memory is to preserve the sacrifices made by what has been dubbed "The Greatest Generation."

To learn more about the Ernie Pyle World War II Museum located in Dana, Indiana, or make a donation to assist the efforts of the Friends of Ernie Pyle to honor him and that generation, go to www.erniepile.org.

We owe our veterans a debt for what they stood and died for

(The following speech was given on Memorial Day 2014 in Clinton by L. Vernon Powell.)

Thank you for the privilege to speak to you on this Memorial Day of 2014. I am pleased and honored.

This is not a celebration of our immediate service, nor is it a glorious opportunity for a day off from work. This is a celebration and a memory of the past 239 years with 62 major conflicts and 1.2 million lives lost. The major actions like the Revolution and World Wars One and Two are easy to remember ... but one killed in Desert Storm is just as important a hero as one who died in the Pacific or at Concord, in Europe or at Musgrove Mill, a few miles from here.

These were our kinfolk and the kin of many others back through the years. We owe them a debt - a debt of gratitude for what they stood for - and what they died for: Our Republic, Our Constitution, Our Bill of Rights.

They provided us with the freedom to worship as we please, the freedom of free speech, freedom to print, the freedom to gather as we have today, to have a fair trial with representation, to avoid having soldiers take over our homes without permission, freedom to address the government and our representatives, among other freedoms to our person and state.

This meeting in Laurens County is our way of making a payment on our debt to those who have gone before. To quote President Lincoln



Vernon Powell at the Memorial Day celebration in Clinton.

--Photo by Vic MacDonald

from his Gettysburg Address: "From these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain."

And from General James A. Garfield at the first National Memorial Observance in May of 1869 when he said, "They summed up and perfected by one supreme act, the highest

Vernon Powell is well-known in this area as the director of food service and catering at P.C. for a total of 35 years. He fed nearly every church and group in the county many times. The following is Vernon Powell on Vernon Powell.

I was educated at North Greenville Baptist Academy and Junior College, now North Greenville University, where I was exposed to all the building crafts and food service opportunities. (I was the first male to take Home Ec.).

I was dragged away from my basic training and service school. By virtue of my previous training and schooling, I did not have to attend a service school, but was assigned as an instructor in the cooks and mess sergeants school after I had written and delivered a lecture on nutrition.

I was transferred to Fort Lewis, Wa. as a "buck sergeant" (three stripes). My T-4 rank would not have transferred. However, his MOS, mastery of skill, number was for mess sergeant. I turned it down at Fort Lewis and became a first cook for several months in Co. E, 63 until selected by the First Engineer Special Brigade to be their mess sergeant Pacific. While in Tacona, Wa., employees were so scarce that soldiers could work off-shift

jobs. I worked in the display department of People's Department Store before joining the brigade. When the war ended, the First Engineer Special Brigade was sent from Okinawa to Inchon, Korea, to assist the Seventh Army in establishing relations, operations, and security in South Korea.

The outfit was located in a former "Mee-dle (High) School." My mess hall was a former gym and the carpenters had to put stiff knees in as the floor was on springs. It had a shrine area on the side that I had screened and used for pastry storage. The gym was also large enough to partition off a room at the front to use as "The Top Hat Bar," named for a hat bought at the public (mostly on the ground) market in Seoul. It could serve only 3% Japanese beer or soft drinks. The first sergeant kept a firm hand on discipline. He was strong. I saw him pick up a guy my size by his shirt front with one hand and set him gently out the front door to go to bed at once.

While in Korea, the medical officer had me check and adjust the officers' mess. I was promoted to Sergeant, First Class. I felt so honored until I was recalled to service and discovered all mess sergeants had become sergeant, first class. That let the wind out of my sails.

I returned to North Greenville after World War II and opened the new Neves Dining

virtues of men and citizens - for love of country, they accepted death, and resolved all doubts, and made immortal their patriotism and virtue."

It is my hope that on our hearts and minds that we will make this payment to the departed veterans of the past with love, honor and respect for all these whom we memorialize this day.

At this time, let us express our gratitude to the VFW and the American Legion and their Auxiliaries who with the aid of the Scouts and the ROTC have placed flags at the graves of veterans and to the Guards in the armories who respond in times of community disaster and national need.

We appreciate the sponsorship of Boys State and Girls State to teach our young people better civic government. Your support is encouraged.

Our civic organizations as the Lions, Rotary and Kiwanis give a great boost to our pride by supporting their aims of promoting the spiritual aspects of life, living by the Golden Rule, setting higher standards for a citizenship that encourages Justice, Righteousness, Care for others, Goodwill and Patriotism.

Since the basis for all this activity is simply put by the word Love, we should be mindful of the Thirteenth Chapter of First Corinthians - The Love Chapter of The New Testament.

Love is not envious, boastful, arrogant, rude, self-serving, irritable, keeper of a

grudge, or prone to rejoice in the woes of others.

Love is long-suffering, kind, truthful, bears all things, believes, hopes and endures. We have three things to hinge our lives on - Faith in God, in ourselves, in our country, in our fellow man; Hope for our future; and Love for all - God, country, our neighbors - and the greatest of these is Love.

As we continue our daily lives of remembering, honor, love and respect, let us recall the abridged lines from the poem "L'envoi" - "When Earth's last picture is painted, and the tubes are twisted and dried. When the oldest colors have faded and the youngest soldier has died, they shall rest and, Faith, they shall need it. Lie down for an eon or two, Til the Commander of all good soldiers shall call them to service anew."

I would be remiss if I did not remind you of the words assigned to the bugle call of "Taps".

"Day is done, Gone the sun, From the hills, from the lakes, from the skies, All is well. Safely rest, God is nigh."

Please, I implore you, remember these words every time you hear a tribute sounded to a fallen warrior of any era, past or present. It is one more payment on our debt of gratitude!

Our profound thanks to the American Legion Auxiliary and to Mrs. Robbie Cruickshanks for producing this program, and may God continue to bless you and America. Thank you and amen.

Hall. In 1947, I came to P.C. for 13 years and then did a stint in Asheville with Buck's Restaurant and Drive-In. I established the Carleton House Restaurant in Rocky Mount, N.C. for the noted band leader Kay Kyzer and tobacco-man Carleton Noel.

I returned to Clinton to operate Vernon's Restaurant and Motel (formerly Roddy's) and then the Hotel Mary Musgrove. I was director for five years at Newberry College's Kaufman Hall and five years as catering manager for Atlas Vending Co. In 1977, I returned to P.C. for 22 years and retired in June 1999.

My home has been in Laurens since 1981, but the house on Chestnut Street in Clinton will always have a warm place in my heart. My older son, Joe, lives in Issaquah, Wa. near Seattle, and he left the Navy after 13 years as a chief in submarine sonar and retired from Microsoft after 17 years.

I was recalled to service in 1950 and re-opened the Receiving Mess at Fort Jackson, feeding up to 14,000 meals in a 24-hour day, and then I was transferred to Fort McPherson to operate the Officers Club food service. I came a master sergeant but dressed in civilian clothes as the officers were more at ease while at the club where I also resided. (The bar manager would slip a fifth of I.W. Harper bourbon into my chest of drawers

each Monday, and I would slip it back in the liquor cases which were stored in my bedroom, to avoid a forced vacation in Leavenworth).

The younger son, Rob, a two-year Navy musician on a flat top in the Mediterranean, and a retired school band director, and his son, Bobby, also a former band director and current conductor of "Upstate Winds," a group of 40 musicians who love to play good music, both work at "Musical Innovations" in Mauldin. They live in Easley. Bobby also teaches private trombone students. The group has concertized at several churches and schools and will present a concert on the Yorktown in Charleston on Memorial Day. There is to be an encore presentation at Mauldin First Baptist on July 6 at 10:45 a.m. You are invited.

I lost my beloved wife, Velma Beaty, of sixty-four and a half years to a stroke in March of 2007. (Her father was skeptical about it lasting when I asked for her hand).

I have enjoyed each of his various tenures and cherishes the memories of my associates including the staffers at Ridgcrest Baptist Assembly who for nine summers called me "Uncle Vernon." I still cook at home, but exposure to huge groups makes it difficult to prepare for a party of one — leftovers galore.



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Bailey Manor veterans pictured left to right 1st row: Jim Overstreet, Larry "Bubba" Long, and Alton Payton; 2nd row: Tom Gentry, Boh Kramm, and Bill Sellers. Not pictured is Earl Rice.



WE WOULD LIKE TO HONOR THOSE THAT HAVE SERVED OUR COUNTRY WITH GRACE AND DISTINCTION! WE SALUTE YOU, VETERANS!



Bailey Manor held a luncheon for Veterans on Memorial Day. Pictured above are veterans and residents arriving for the luncheon.



Pictured above are Clyde Lindsay and Carolyn Williams joining with the crowd to sing both verses of the National Anthem.

Rev. J.D. Shiflet -- U.S. Marines, Vietnam

By Vic MacDonald

For Vet Salute 2014

Man's inhumanity to man, inhumanity to women and children - the assault on the senses, war is difficult to articulate for those who have not been in it, says Laurens minister J.D. Shiflet.

"It is hard to explain war. The smells - burned flesh, burning vegetation. What you hear - the moans, the cries. The things you see, the emotion of it," the Vietnam veteran said. "I have talked to World War II veterans who have said, 'I cannot be forgiven, for what I have done.'

"I tell them, God can forgive anything." Shiflet, a member of the Laurens County Hall of Heroes, is the pastor of Second Baptist Church in Laurens. Interviewed June 16, he was preparing to take the church's trash to the dump, the city's trash crew missed the church on pick-up day. His calls to have the trash picked up had not been responded to - and there was a particular reason the trash could not sit another week at the church: Vacation Bible School started that night.

Shiflet's daughter, Donya Langston, was in charge of VBS. She would not have liked it if the church and grounds were not taken care of, if the trash was left unattended. During the interview, Shiflet attended to a cellphone call about a youngster hospitalized out of town, and a call from a deacon about air conditioning.

It was shaping up to be a busy week ahead.

But J.D. Shiflet was taking this opportunity to look back.

He was a shy 17-year-old living in Anderson County when he enlisted in the Marines as the Vietnam War was heating up. After training, he went in-country just in time for the Tet Offensive, one of the deadliest conflicts for American troops in United States military history.

He stayed in-country one tour.

He saw a lifetime of horror in just those months. He and the other teens and 20-somethings he served with became old men - seasoned soldiers. Fresh, young lieutenants would come in and order them to get in a Jeep or half-track and ride out to the battle front on "Highway One" - they would respectfully declined.

"We'll walk you out there,' we always told them. 'But we're not riding in a vehicle.'" They always threatened courts-martial. The lieutenants' vehicles always were blown up by land mines set by the Viet Cong. The wounded lieutenants went home. The seasoned soldiers stayed behind.

"There were coolers the size of a room with bodies stacked on shelves floor to ceiling, in Da Nang. I went with a South Vietnamese sergeant to identify a body. The



Corporal J.D. Shiflet

families meet you on Highway One, the cleared (of land mines) part, and they would be crying."

The sorrow of war was the same - in the jungles of South Vietnam, in the towns of the United States.

"No war is good," Shiflet said.

Shiflet served at the front 20 miles from Da Nang on Hill 10 - Happy Valley, the locals called it. As part of the 7th Marines - with the 9th Marines on their flank - they were charged with protecting Da Nang from rockets. The American soldiers never could tell the good guys from the bad guys, the children who were suicide-bombers from the kids who sold them stuff - \$3 for a bottle Coke, in 1969.

The Americans fought a constant battle with Elephant Grass. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regulars knew how to hide in it - the Americans soon learned, too, adapting to survive.

"I joined (the Marines)," Shiflet said, "because I wanted to escape alcoholic parents. My dad had been in the Marine Corps. My uncle died in World War II. My brother joined and was in-country after me, he was a MP."

Shiflet said his American commanders "tricked us in boot camp," saying he and his comrades would stay in California, to train other troops headed for Vietnam. With that assurance, on a leave and return to South Carolina, J.D. married Sandra. He shipped out, back to California, barely getting off the plane before he and his fellow Marines were in the air to cross the Pacific.

They landed at Da Nang, rolled off the plane on the emergency chutes (the plane crash-landed because with runway was pock-marked by mortar blasts), and spent their first night - without weapons - in foxholes. They got their gear the next morning.



Remembering the battlefields of Vietnam. Rev. J.D. Shiflet, pastor of Second Baptist Church, Laurens, entered the Marines as a shy 17 year old and emerged a seasoned combat veteran who a year after his discharge followed what he says was The Lord's commission into the ministry. "A lot of my friends can't talk about (Vietnam)," Shiflet said, "because they don't have peace with The Lord. I can, because I have peace with The Lord." - Photo by Vic MacDonald

"We did day patrols every day, and night patrols and ambushes every night."

The Marines spent 30-40 days at a time out of their area. They crossed into Laos, on orders, to chase the enemy - a mission the U.S. government cannot acknowledge, it constitutes the invasion of a sovereign nation.

"The Lord was with me," Shiflet said. "I was with my friend Duke in a fox hole, a grenade comes in. It hit my back, like somebody was tapping me on the shoulder. I felt the handle of it in my hand, it burned me. I lobbed it back out, and it exploded in the air."

Duke lost his sight. Shiflet lost his sight and hearing temporarily, and had a concussion. He worked for a while doing office duties and driving for a commander, "I couldn't fire a weapon, I hated that job," he says.

A short while into his deployment, Shiflet was promoted to corporal. He became the commander, since all the lieutenants were killed. They had no corpsmen, the enemy killed them first - then the radio operators, then the lieutenants.

"The first time I got shot at, we were eating C rations by a river," Shiflet said. "The bullet makes a sound as it's coming in. ... Funny, 40 years later, what you remember. It's all like a collage."

He remembers the Viet Cong.

"They put land mines in the floor of the Catholic church that was on our base. We'd have to go dig 'em up. The Viet Cong, really they were terrorists. They engaged in psychological warfare. They took a boy, stitched his hands to his face and sent him back with a note. It was a message to his village.

"That just made us madder."

Shiflet said he and his fellow Marines decided there would be no survivors among the enemy. "They said they would give us an extra week of R&R for a POW. Months and months went by, nobody claimed that extra week, we never got a POW," he said.

"When you see them torment (their own) people like that, you have no sympathy for them."

Shiflet says he was under Conviction

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