



*This story is being told by the Veteran in their own words. No facts were confirmed or discounted.*

**I** was born on April 12, 1929 in Rankin, Pennsylvania. My mother and father had six sons. I was the oldest one. The second son was Paul. The third was a set of twins, George and Thomas. The next son was John. The next one was Robert. We all grew up in Rankin. Church was important to my family and the way I grew up. We eventually moved out of Rankin and moved to a house in West Mifflin. My father and his sons built the house with a carpenter and a bricklayer. They were the instructors telling us what to do.

Growing up in West Mifflin, we were all inducted into the service. I was in the Army and 4 of my brothers also served in the military. My brother Robert, he went and got married. My father said “5 boys is enough.”

We all went and served our country. I was inducted in March 1951 and I went to Fort Campbell Kentucky after my basic training. I was the only one who was injured in battle in Korea, and I was awarded the purple heart. I was hit by 3 hand grenades and the doctor said I had 17 shrapnel wounds. I was with two other buddies who saved my life. One was the machine gunner, Andy (Sam) Baysura, and the other was Carl Fameli, who put his raincoat between two branches and they laid me in there. Then they carried me down the mountain in Korea “bare-ass naked.” I went to a MASH unit in Korea. They took me to Japan next to get patched up. Then they took me to Hawaii where I stayed for four days. Then they sent me to Pasadena California Hospital. I was in 13 VA hospitals altogether. They said at that time I would lose my arm and a leg. I had to do a lot of exercise to get my right leg moving. I thanked everyone for taking care



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of me. Every now and then I get a pain, I know it was from the hand grenade. I don't know who threw the grenade but it was a blessing to get out of Korea. Carl - I watched him. I protected him. Then when it came time, he protected me. Years later I invited Sam to come to a family union. I introduced my family and he told the story about us. It turns out, Sam thought I died that day in Korea. We met up again on the Gateway Clipper during a Day of Caring event for Korean War Veterans. It was then that we discovered we were both born on the same day, April 12, 1929, and grew up within two miles of each. We only met on the train to basic training.

They released me from Fort Campbell Hospital and I went back into the service at Fort Campbell. At Fort Campbell I was made a cadre. I was in charge as a cadre, taking the barracks with about 6 recruits that just got inducted. I took care of all the recruits. I trained them for 6-7 weeks and then the captain called me to his office and he says that I did a good job with the trainees. He said "soldier I appreciate that you were in the barracks #2 and every time we had an inspection, your barracks was always awarded the flag." I explained to the recruits when I blow this whistle, everyone has to assemble into position. Every time I blew the whistle, they came.

Soon after, I became a civilian, I moved to Jefferson Hills, Pennsylvania. I met this girl and I found out she was the same religion I was. I brought her to meet my mother and father and they approved. Then she took me to meet her mother and father and they approved me. Then I got married and I had 5 beautiful children. When they were growing up, I would take my children to South Park in the evenings while my wife cooked. Once in a while, I'd make a campfire and they liked that. That was wonderful. Throughout my life, religion has been important to me. I'm a member of St. Michael's Orthodox church in Rankin. In the past, I served as vice president of the parish. They nominated me, and I was feeling honored. My friend, Mike Belanchik, and me, we were caretakers. We helped in the church – anything that was needed we got it for the



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church. There was one time, the people wanted church to start at 9 o'clock and the priest was against it. I was one of the people standing up for the parishioners, and we succeeded. Even today church is 9 o'clock in the morning.

I had a number of jobs in my life. At one point, I worked for a cemetery. I was the truck driver. The other two guys were helpers. They put the coffin into the grave. There were a lot of people buried every day. One day we were at the top of the cemetery and everything slipped. The cement box we were unloading went down past 30 monuments. It missed all the headstones. I quit after a couple days, that was enough. I told Mr. Hughes, a man who moved across the street from where I lived in Jefferson Hills, what happened. He told me to go to Westinghouse and tell them "Mr. Hughes sent you." I started to work for Westinghouse. They put me in the mailroom. I did a pretty good job. The boss said "you don't belong here" and got me a job in procurement. I was in charge of shipping and receiving. I had 11 men: 5 drivers and 6 guys working on the platform. I worked 33 years. I was always with the managers. They always depended on me. One day, I went to a meeting, the president said business is slowing down, we're going to have 20% layoff. I heard that and I decided it's time to retire. I told my buddy "I've had enough. I did enough." I was 58 years old. I already had a family.

Retirement is good. My children are the best thing in my life since I retired, and my friends. Some people want to know why I retired so fast, it was for me and my family. The way my father treated his sons, I tried to pass that on to my children. I lived my father's life and I lived my life. I had a pretty good situation all throughout my life. I never made an enemy.



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