

She remembers helping set up two temporary hospitals when ammunition ships, ready to sail, exploded leaving 322 dead and many wounded. There were also five boys she had trained to be surgical technicians killed by a Japanese suicide plane.



Maxine Carr

However, there were good times, too. Like working nights in the maternity ward and playing basketball for the navy team.

Her final stops during the war were at a hospital in Farragut, Idaho, and the North Island Air station in San Diego.

Her uniforms are on display at the Kansas State Historical Museum along with a history of her service.

Ms. Carr later served in the Korean War. In between her tours of duty, she got a degree in anesthesia at the University of Minnesota and learned to fly. After 54 years as a nurse, she went back to school and got degrees in archeology and anthropology.

She has visited all seven continents, including a trip to Antarctica when she was 80.

“There wasn’t any real fighting,” he said. “The Japs had pretty much already left.”

Private. David was discharged in Sept. 1946. “I enjoyed it,” he said, “but I wouldn’t want to do it again.”

His homecoming, he said, was terrific, especially seeing his daughter, who he had only seen once.

“I saw her when she was 4 months old at Christmas,” he said. “She was a year old when I got out. She was born while I was still in training.”

Life was different then, he said. Soldiers were treated well. If they wanted to hitchhike, they had a ride within five minutes. Everybody, he said, treated them terrific.

He said he probably didn’t think much about Pearl Harbor back then and didn’t realize how bad it was until a couple of years ago when he went there.

“It was a terrible day,” he said. “No one was ready for it.”

When he was discharged, he said, he had a wife, a kid and \$300, which was his mustering out pay.

Now that he is retired, he restores old trucks and sells them all over the country.

In the 60 years the Davids have been married, they’ve had seven children, 15 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. They live in Lenora.



Norval Hastings and his wife Berniece

Lyman David

When he went into basic training in August of 1945, 6th Division Infantryman Lyman David was married with a child on the way.

“If we hadn’t fought that war, we would’ve been under a dictatorship,” he said. “I was raring to go.”



Lyman David

He said when he was drafted, he was willing to go and would have gone sooner, but his father had gotten hurt and so he had to stay home and help.

His senior year in high school, he went to Denver because he thought he wanted to work in a defense plant. After he came back, he married his wife, Myrna, in 1944, helped his dad, got drafted and left in August.

Overseas, he served in Korea, where they were a police force and built barracks.

Carrol Hall

Staff Sergeant Carrol Hall served in the Army from 1942-1946. When he went to Europe, where he was head of supplies. He and his crew followed the soldiers around and cooked for them.

Mr. Hall now lives at Whispering Pines with his wife Evelyn.



Carrol Hall

Norval Hastings

When Pearl Harbor was bombed Dec. 7, 1941, Norval Hastings was 27.

He wondered what kind of impact it would have on his life. He remembers feeling concerned for the service men killed in the attack.

He was driving a truck hauling dirt for a dam

project in Colorado when the letter came, drafting him into the Army.

He left Colby on May 1, 1942, and went to Fort Riley.

He was the first married man to be drafted from Colby. From Fort Riley he was shipped to Camp Bowie, and then to Fort Benning, Ga., where his mechanical skills were sharpened before being sent to New Guinea and other islands of the South Pacific to keep the vehicles running.

Fighting occurred when the Japanese came ashore. He remembers the foxhole being close to his bed and what an important part the trees of the island played in protection from the enemy.

One night the Japanese dropped a bomb, he said. He was just getting into the foxhole when the second bomb, a “daisy cutter”, exploded. His upper body made it into the foxhole but shrapnel hit him in the lower part of the body. The medics were able to remove the large pieces, he said, but he carries the small pieces with him today. He was awarded a Purple Heart.

He enjoyed being a mechanic. The guys always felt the vehicle would run as best it could

when he was part of the repair team, he said.

When he was not being a mechanic, he drove a truck with the anti-tank gun.

It was dangerous but he did, like so many others, what was expected of him.

He remembers one time his brother-in-law, Louis Ramey, who was with the 37th Engineers Battalion, was at his base. As a recruit, Mr. Hastings was not allowed to leave but, his brother-in-law wanted to treat him to a beer. So recruit Hastings put on a braided hat and they had a drink together.

He said they visited long into the night and three days later, his brother-in-law was shipped out.

He was discharged in Fort Logan, Colo., in 1946 and came by train to Benkelman, Neb.

Despite the fact that troop trains were famous for being late, his wife and uncle were at the Benkelman station before the train left Denver.

Reflecting on his service, he said, “It was just something I had to do. I was not any greater than any of the others who went to war.

“I do think the time I spent in the Army made me appreciate America more. I never took freedom for granted again.”



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Merle Hawks

After Pearl Harbor got bombed, Merle Hawks didn't realize the war would last as long as it did. "I was still in high school when Pearl Harbor got hit," he said. "At that time, I thought it would



Merle Hawks

be over in a week or two. We didn't think about getting in ourselves. We were way too young, just freshmen.

"Everyone was pretty much behind it. Everybody pulled in, similar to the way it was with 9/11. Everybody stuck together. It was different than it was with other wars."

When he was drafted he was 18 and had just graduated. He went into service on Aug. 5, 1944 and, after basic training, was stationed on the USS Rakin, which wasn't large and had a crew of about 400.

He served in the Pacific, including at Layte Gulf, Okinawa, Japan and the Solomon Islands, as an engineer on the landing craft. He was in the amphibious corps.

"At Okinawa we had quite a time dodging submarines," he said. "We also had kamikaze coming at us all the time. This was pretty close to when they dropped the atomic bombs."

He said the ship he was on was never directly hit. It was pelted with a lot of scrap, but he didn't think anyone was hurt too bad.

"Combat makes you realize how good it is to be alive," he said. "We had our share, although we didn't have to worry about the fox holes like the soldiers did."

Mr. Hawks said there were quite a few good times, too. He said they spent some time in Hawaii, which is a beautiful place.

When he was discharged on June 5, 1946, he held the rank of fireman first class and was anxious to get out.

After he got out, he married his girlfriend Ivalee, who had waited for him. They were married for 46 years before she died.

They had four sons, two of whom are still living, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

He has farmed and carried mail, and now that he's retired he owns and operated a livestock supply business in Alma, where he lives.



Kenneth Hays

Kenneth Hays

Kenneth Hays enlisted when he was 19 in December of 1942.

"The war was on and I wanted to be a part of it," he said.

"Three of us boys were driving around one afternoon and we didn't have anything better to do, so we enlisted. Our parents weren't very happy with us when they found out."

The first year he was in the Army, he had an

office job and worked 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"I thought it was a pretty good way to fight a war," he said. "Then one day, they sent in a girl to do the job and I went to the infantry."

Private Hays became a rifleman in the 130th Infantry Division.

He fought in the Rhineland, which is where he got his Bronze Star, and also in the southern part of the Battle of the Bulge.

"After the Battle of the Bulge, we retreated 25 miles," he said.

"We had just four guys left out of the 12 in our squad and just 18 left in the platoon. I was made the squad leader, even though I was still a Private First Class."

Mr. Hays said he fought in France and Germany during the winter of 1944-1945 and the conditions weren't great.

"We got one shower and change of clothes in six months," he said. "When we did get that shower, we ran through the lukewarm water that was coming out of a big tanker truck and when we got to the other side, they gave us some new clothes."

"I didn't have any gloves, so I wrote to my mother and she sent me a pair. I wrote every week, but it didn't always get there."

He said they used to keep a pair of socks wrapped around their waists, so that when their socks got wet, they would have a pair to change into.

Once the wet socks came off their feet, they were wrapped around their waists to dry, until the other pair got wet.

After that winter, he spent five months in a hospital in Paris because he had hepatitis. That was when he got all of his mail, a big sack of it.

When he got out of the hospital in 1945, he received a medical discharge.

Fifty years later, he got a letter from the war department, asking him to go to Topeka to get the medals he should have gotten during the war. Fourteen men who served went.

Since his discharge, he has farmed and been a cattle rancher. He and his wife Faith met on a not-so-blind date shortly after he returned home. They knew each other a little in grade school, she said. On Oct. 5, they celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary.

They had three children, two boys and a girl. Their daughter died in 1989. One son lives in Arizona and the other works the farm, which is just south of Alma.

Mr. and Mrs. Hays live in Alma. They recently visited the World War II Memorial in Washington, which, he said, is quite a deal.

Vernon Heitman

Vernon Heitman served 18 months, 13 days in the Army. He was a private first class in the 90th Infantry Division until he was discharged because of disability on Sept. 28, 1943.

He said he was at Kansas State University when he heard about Pearl Harbor.

"I remember I was in my room when I heard them talking about it," he said. "I knew then that I'd be drafted and didn't bother enrolling in the next semester."

He went into the service on March 15, 1942. He was almost 22. He was sent to Fort Leavenworth, then on to Camp Bartley in Abilene, Texas.

"When we left Leavenworth, we didn't know where we were or where we were going," he said. "When we got there we kept training and retraining. It was quite an experience."

He was transferred to the Intelligence Division, where he was stationed at a listening post. The only problem, he said, was that he couldn't hear anything. When he told his superiors, they had his hearing tested and discharged him.

Mr. Heitman said practice on the firing range had caused the deterioration of his hearing.

"In those days, they didn't give you ear plugs," he said.

He stayed in the hospital until he was sent home in October. He said he went to work on the farm and then in February, went to work at the post office in a temporary position. He stayed 41 years, becoming the postmaster.

Later, his captain told him his outfit was in the Normandy landing.

"The captain told me one of our boys from the 90th was the first casualty," said Mr. Heitman. "All of them were casualties. Not all of them got killed, but everyone was wounded."


He and his wife Betty were engaged on Valentine's Day just before he went into the service. She drove down to Texas and he took leave for a night and they got married.

In 1950-'51, he finished college with a degree in agriculture and went back to the post office.

Mr. and Mrs. Heitman live four miles east of Norton. They have four children, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Vernon Heitman



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