

## Korean War Veterans continues

We continue with Louis Boell's story from last week and then we'll go into his twin brothers' military history.

### Louis Boell

From there, the ammo was shipped to Korea. The ammunition that was not loaded onto planes was stockpiled on the base. They also hauled the troops out to the field for maneuvers and when they were complete they would go out and pick them up and bring them back to the base.

In June, once the snow and ice had melted, all of the new drivers had to take a driving test. If they failed to complete the test, they were not allowed to continue as truck drivers. The test consisted of driving the truck down the side of a small mountain, turning around, and then coming back up. Louis was one of the few who were able to complete the test successfully, so the rest of his Army career was spent as a truck driver.

In September of 1952 the army completed the construction of an ammunition bunker in the foot of a mountain, and then they began hauling ammunition and bombs to this bunker for storage. When the trucks left Ladd AFB they were given a password, which was needed when they reached the bunker before they could gain access. One day, after Louis left the base, the password got changed. When he reached the bunker in the mountain, they asked him for his password and he told them what he had been instructed to say, not knowing that it had changed after he had left. He was held under armed guard in the office until his company commander arrived to have him released. Sometimes they would take the troops out as far north as the roads were built at that time. This was above the timber line, close to the Arctic Circle at Circle City, Alaska.

The Air Force pilots flew reconnaissance missions 24 hours a day west to Nome and out over the Bering Strait looking for movements of Russian troops. When the army men were off duty they were allowed to accompany the pilots on their surveillance maneuvers. One day Louis decided that he would like to fly along on one of these missions. The pilots liked to see what they could do to scare the army men by doing rolls and flying upside down and in loops. After one of these missions, Louis decided that staying landlocked during his time off seemed like a lot better idea.

One day, during the winter of 1952-53, Louis found an Alaskan Malamute puppy wandering in the streets. He adopted the puppy and had him for about three months and in March he was asked if he wanted to reenlist. At that time, Alaska was still a territory. It was not granted statehood until 1959. He was told that if he reenlisted, that he would receive 160 acres of Alaskan land as a signing bonus. But, he elected to come home instead. He wanted to take his puppy with him, but since Alaska was not yet a state, he was not allowed to import the puppy into the country and he had to leave it in Alaska. He was sent to Fort Carson, Colorado, where he was honorably discharged on March 4, 1953.

### #5 Richard Boell (1 picture, no other information)

### #6 Robert Boell (1 picture, no other information)



Robert Boell, Richard Boell

Richard and Robert Boell, twin sons of Paul and Helen (Baumhoyer) Boell, were inducted into the U.S. Army May 12, 1953. They served during the Korean War and were discharged March 2, 1955.

### #7 Virgil V. Book (no pictures, basic information)

1931 - 1953 Iowa PFC US Marine Corps - buried in the Manning Cemetery

### Taken from the 1981 Gray Centennial book

Virgil Book was born on March 25, 1931 to Vincent and Helga Book. He was drafted into the Marine Corps in 1952, and had his boot camp training in San Diego, California.

In the spring of 1953 he became very ill and died of cancer on April 28, 1953, while still in the Marine Corps.

### #8 Laverne Borkowski (no pictures, information from an interview)

On August 30, 2015, Laverne made an unexpected visit to our farm to go over his military story. He knew I was looking for information about his service, and we had a nice chat. I was able to record the conversation with my digital audio recorder which is very helpful when interviewing someone.

As he left our place I told him I would get his story transcribed and send him copy. Like usual, I had many other projects in the works and I thought I would have plenty of time to work more with him in the future, and then the unexpected occurred when Laverne passed away on February 12, 2016.

At least in this case, I was able to get some information from him but was not able to go over his story with him at a later date to confirm and expand on what he told me.

At the time, Laverne told me he didn't have any military pictures but I have been hoping that his family might find some after-all...here is the transcription from that interview.

### Laverne Borkowski interview August 30, 2015

Laverne was living with his folks in Clay County near Greenville, Iowa, when he entered the service.

Laverne knew he would be drafted and he knew he could "swim better than he could dig" so in August of 1955 he went to recruiting office in Spencer to enlist in the Navy.

He went to Great Lakes for boot camp where he took schooling in aviation hydraulics.

The first planes Laverne worked on were twin engine Navy propeller planes...the jet planes were still in their infancy.

From 1957 through 1959 he was assigned to the Oceana Naval Base in Virginia Beach, Virginia. This was during the time when Fidel Castro was stirring up problems in Cuba - after the Korean War and before the Vietnam War became hot.

He served with the BA-76 squadron (Attack Water) and worked with jet planes. He would ride the Naval carrier out to sea, sometimes for only two weeks to train with the crew, and then they would return to base.

He served on the USS Forrestal, Intrepid "Rusty Eye" and Valley Forge.

During several of his tours on a carrier they went to liberty ports at Lisbon, Portugal; Rotterdam, Netherlands; and Belgium, where they were able to receive liberty passes and were bussed to the World's Fair in Brussels in 1958.

While at Lisbon they anchored out in the river, and when the tide would go out or come back in they had to switch the anchor point of the Intrepid from one end of the ship to the other end.

They also visited Norway, going through the huge Fiords. While up on the flight deck, Laverne described the sensation that he could "reach out and touch the steep rock banks" of the Fiord.

After tours overseas they would return to Oceana, and then start the process all over again...back out to sea for training missions, and then return to Oceana.

Laverne was released from the Navy and received his discharge papers at Oceana in August 1959. At that time his parents lived near Storm Lake, Iowa. Laverne went to Storm Lake, where he found a job and was married. The couple moved to Cherokee, where Laverne worked at a machine shop for over twenty years. This is where he and his wife raised their seven children.

After his discharge from the service Laverne received a visitor's pass on the USS Kennedy to go see his younger brother who was serving at that time.

### #9 Andrew B. Brinks (no pictures or information)

The only information I have that Andrew is a Korean Veteran comes from the Manning Memorial Day program.

I'm aware of this spelling (Brincks) in this area so it could be that Andrew's last name is misspelled on the program but unless someone comes forward I'll have to use Brinks.

### #10 Herbert Bruhn (several pictures, information from Herb's handwritten autobiography about his service)



Herbert Bruhn American Legion Commander 1966-67

Herb was a neighbor of mine and good friend and when I was a kid I would drive the tractor for him during hay baling season.

One day in the early 2000s I was visiting with Herb about his military service and told him we were working on the Manning Quasquicentennial book and that there would be a Veterans section in this book. Herb told me he had written down some information about his service in the past, but he didn't remember for sure where he had it stored.

As the Quasqui book project proceeded I became overwhelmed with scanning pictures and digitizing information that was brought forth. I forget who worked with Herb but this is the overview he submitted.

### Herbert Bruhn - Veterans section of the 2006 Quasqui book

Herb was drafted into service July 2, 1951, at Audubon, Iowa, and took basic training at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky. He went to Fort Lawton, Washington, and was shipped out on the Marine Adder on January 4, 1952, for Yokohama, Japan. He took medical training in Japan and after that he was transferred to Pusan, Korea, and assigned to the 25th Division 35th Regiment. On March 8, 1952, Herb was sent to the front lines where he treated wounded U.S. soldiers. During one event, Herb and the medic he worked with went a long way past their lines one evening to recover three U.S. soldiers (an experience he never forgot). On March 20, Herb was transferred to Camp Schimmelpfennig, Sendai, Japan, where he served for about one year. Herb was discharged at Camp Carson, Colorado, on June 9, 1953, with the rank of Corporal.

While this version above gives the basic information it doesn't provide the details that we would like to have in the Manning Veterans' history book.

I had forgotten about the conversation I had with Herb in early 2000 and then he passed away in 2002. Then it came back to me, so I informed the family about this information and asked them to look for it when they started going through Herb's things.

Here is an image of the first of two pages Herb wrote, and the complete transcription below.

It gives a much better perspective about Herb's experiences and mentions locations and ships, which was important when going through the military pictures Herb had kept.

Korean War Veteran = Herbert Bruhn

Drafted into service 2 July, 1951, at Audubon, Ia.  
Took basic training at Camp Breckinridge in Western Kentucky.  
Left there Dec 8 - had 10 day furlough, 18 Dec arrived at Fort Lawton-Washington: 3 Jan 1952 Boarded to Marine Barracks - 4 Jan Boarded ship: the Marine Adder - 523 ft long, 72 ft wide - ship left middle of afternoon - before dark we got thru the Straits, then turn down along the coast were trying to miss a Pacific storm - 5 Jan was on the sea sickness side - after that day got better - then we got into some of the storm - was quite rough a few days - It took us 21 days to get to Yokohama - when we unloaded I found out that I was picked to go to medical school. (When I signed in at Fort Lawton the officer told me that if you're not late on arrival date - and they have openings for schooling - your name gets in the Drawing Box.) Went to Medical School northwest of Tokyo - 4 week course - then we went down to Sasebo by train - there loaded onto ship + went to Pusan Korea - took train north - used duffel bag + backpacks to seal cracks in our box cars, it did have benches - don't remember name of place we got off - then went by truck to the Punch Bowl area - on 8 March 1952 at Reveille - Robert B. Brinson + I were told to have things packed + ready to go to front lines we were assigned to the 25th Division 35th Regt. It was getting dark by the time we got to our Bunker - there were some casualties - then one day after dinner the worst happened - one disarranged soldier came over the hill - finally they got out of him that his Bunker was hit.

"Drafted into service July 2, 1951 at Audubon, Iowa.

Took basic training at camp Breckenridge in Western Kentucky.

Left there December 8 - had a 10-day furlough, on December 18 arrived at Fort Lawton, Washington. January 3, 1952 was bussed to Marine Barracks.

January 4 we boarded the ship Marine Adder which is 523 feet long and 72 feet wide. The ship left in the middle of the afternoon. Before darkness we got through the Straits, then turned down along the coast because we were trying to avoid a Pacific storm. On January 5, I was on the sea sickness side and after that day got better. Then we got into some of the storm which was quite rough for a few days. It took us 21 days to

get to Yokohama, Japan. When we unloaded I found out that I was picked to go to Medical School (when I signed in at Fort Lawton, the officer told me that if you're not late on arrival date and they have openings for schooling your name gets in the Drawing Box).

Went to Medical School northwest of Tokyo for a 4-week course. Then we went down to Sasebo by train - there we loaded onto a ship and went to Pusan, Korea. We took a train north. We used duffel bags and backpacks to seal cracks in our box car. It did have benches - don't remember the name of place we got off.

Then we went by truck to the Punch Bowl area. On March 8, 1952 at Reveille, Robert B. Brinson & I were told to have things packed and ready to go to the front lines. We were assigned to the 25th Division 35th Regiment. It was getting dark by the time we got to our bunkers.

There were some casualties, then one day after dinner the worst happened - one disarranged soldier came over the hill and finally they got out of him that his bunker was hit. So our medic & Brinson & I went. It was quite a ways east of us. We went over the ridge and back a little to the bunker. Following the trench the medic went into the bunker - then I went inside to help him. We had three unconscious soldiers in there - we straightened them up the best we could.

They were sitting in the bunker with a blanket spread out and cleaning a B.A.R. - having the weapons apart when a mortar came in and landed in the trench which was only inches from the entryway. So the full blast went into the bunker - the soldier that survived was sleeping along the west side so the others got the full blast. We dressed some wounds and checked pulse and decided the one to take back so we got him secure to the stretcher and took off. Going back past and beyond our bunker to the tram - the path was tough with some protruding rocks to go over. When we got back we were told that some others would get the remaining two after dark. We were thanked for what we did as it was way past our line.

I always wonder why that mortar didn't go 10 inches west or 8-10 inches down the mountain or 20 inches further up - then it would have been different.

Late Friday night on March 20 a cadre brought two replacements up and Brinson & I were to go back to headquarters and then got shipped out. We left through Inchon - back to Sasebo, Japan - then by train went to Sendai, Japan - a ways north of Tokyo. We were transferred to the 24th Division 21st Regiment, Medics Company at Camp Schimmelpfennig, Sendai, Japan where we were for a little over a year. We took a train down to Yokohama - then boarded the ship General M.M. Patrick. On the way home we stopped at Adak, Alaska and then went to Seattle, Washington - this trip took 10 days. Then we took a train east through Washington, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado where we got discharged at Camp Carson, Colorado on June 9, 1953.

I was discharged with a rank of Corporal."

Between the 2006 write-up and Herb's hand-written story I was able to fit in some of the military pictures Herb had in his collection. Herb wrote on the back of some of his pictures but most had no information. Fortunately I was able to connect one picture that had the company sign, to Herb's write-up.

Most of the time I'll find quite a few military pictures for a Veteran but no identifying information was included and if I didn't have any information from the Veteran, then all I can do is to surmise they were at those locations.

This shows the importance of Veterans taking some time to go through their military pictures and write down captions and information about their pictures.



Herb didn't mention Company C, 506th Airborne Infantry Regiment in either of his write-ups but I was able to determine that this company was located at Camp Breckinridge during the Korean War and was where Herb took his basic training. So fortunately the sign was in the background of this picture because nothing was written on the back of this picture.

This shows the importance of Veterans writing down information about their service and also include captions for their pictures.



Herb wrote on the back of this picture - that it was taken at Camp Schimmelpfennig, Sendai, Japan on October 1952.

Then Herb wrote in both write-ups that he was stationed at this camp for about a year before heading home.

While I'm very happy I was able to connect several of Herb's pictures to his story...this takes extra time and effort by me and would really be helpful if the Veteran or a family member would do this.