

plus other cultural/industrial facilities and activities in the Seoul area. Other tours of battle sites and/or Incheon may be made through the local tour guide.

3. A special reception and dinner hosted by the President of the Korean Veterans Association (KVA) during which the Korea War Medal and Certificate of Ambassador for Peace will be awarded to each veteran who has not received it before.

Sundry Notes

1. The KVA Revisit Program privileges are provided for scheduled groups only.

2. Participants are required to have a valid passport: a visa is not required for visits of 15 days or fewer in Korea.

3. KVA/Seoul is not responsible for any loss of, or damage to, personal or other items, medical expenses, injuries, or loss of like due to any accident of whatever nature during the revisits. Trip cancellation insurance is available and highly recommended.

4. Transportation costs to and from Korea will be borne by each person who participates in the program.

5. Applications will be received/accepted on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

Note: *If you have previously accepted an official KVA/Seoul Revisit tour from any sponsoring association or group, you are NOT eligible to participate again. The reason is that so many veterans have not gone before so they get the "first right of return."*

Because former Revisit Program participants have their name in the KVA/Seoul's computer database, please do not try to beat the system. If your name is rejected because of prior participation, all of us will be embarrassed and an eligible Korea War veteran might miss the opportunity to participate.

6. If you want to use your frequent flier miles-or other "free" transportation, you will be charged an administrative service fee of \$300 per person.

Caution: Not traveling with KWVA group air contract can result in much higher post-tour costs to China and other Pacific location.

Note: Should you desire to have a single room or take additional family or friends with you, this can be arranged for an additional cost. Any such requests must be made in writing.

REVISIT *News*

Largest Ever "Return To Korea" Group Feted

Korea Veterans Association Chairman Park Seh-jik gave a welcoming address to Korean War (1950-1953) veterans from the United States and Ethiopia at the Sofitel Ambassador Hotel, Seoul, Tuesday. It was reportedly the largest group ever to return to Korea.

I Have Been In The Presence Of Heroes

I just returned from a revisit tour to Korea. We went to a museum there, where groups of school kids swarmed all around the group. They practiced their English and chatted as much as they could with the veterans. I don't think the kids really understood that these men were the same ones they saw in videos playing throughout the museum, but it was great to see their smiles. And I wondered if any of them felt the same thing I did regarding the veterans on the tour: I have been in the presence of heroes.

In the face of a pain so deep and inexpressible at the horror they have lived through, and the comrades they have lost, these men carry on. These who live are not puffed up with pride. They are humble, and sometimes unsure of why they were allowed to live while their brothers died beside them.

Perhaps the smiles they brought to the faces of the Korean children were the reason. Those smiles would not be if not for the sacrifice and dedication of these giants. The children may forget in time just who did what in that horrible thing called war, but they are the reflection of the sacrifices and heroism of Korean War vets. Their presence and their smiles testify to the worthiness of the cause of the men who made it possible for these children to one day come into a world made somewhat better, somewhat safer, and somewhat nobler by the stand taken by these Korean War veterans.

And though the veterans' bodies are failing, their spirit is so strong. There remains a bit of the lion in each one. They are humble and kind, patient and quiet. These are angels God sent to pro-

tect the Korean people. These are the survivors who sacrificed everything for freedom. These are Korean War veterans, and my life has changed for the better by being in their presence.

Their strength is as quiet and gentle now as it was bold and fearsome then. I pray that God would fill each of these soldiers with his peace, and a blessing to eclipse the sacrifice and hardship they've endured.

Thank you, Korean veterans.

Mike Schurch, 2ID Camp Hovey (1984 - 85), via email

"My Brother... I came back!"

Korean War veteran Lyell Edward Brown finds his brother's name on the wall of the Korean War Museum in Seoul

Lyell Brown was an 18-year-old boy when he participated in the Korean War as a U.S. soldier. He returned to Korea recently as a man in his early 70s. Brown, a member of CID 296, Auburn Cayuga County [NY], was one of nine Korean War veterans from the Syracuse, NY, area who returned in response to an invitation from the Pyongyang Presbytery, Rev Young Bok Kwon, Moderator (Presbyterian Church of Korea). The trip brought back some painful memories for Brown: one of his duties during the war was to identify his brother's body.

On the afternoon of June 26, 2006, it was raining on and off in Seoul. There, in front of the panel commemorating the Korean War dead at the entrance of the Korean War Museum, stood a Korean War veteran shedding tears as big and round as the rain drops cascading from the sky. That person was Lyell Edward Brown.

Although he had been born in 1933, and was now 73 years old, he once again felt like that 18-year-old soldier who had been in action near Chulwon Reservoir as he stood in front of the epitaph of war dead. For Lyell, the bittersweet visit to the museum was the realization of a long-time dream.

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Book Review

Mid-Century Warrior: A Soldier's Journey to Korea, *Warren Gardner MacDonald, USA (Ret).*

150 pp., Lulu Press, Inc, 2006. ISBN 1-4116-7307-7

By Kris Barnett

Begun as notes in 1952 while Warren MacDonald recuperated from wounds sustained in combat in Korea, evolving as a complete manuscript in 1975, and published in 2006, *Mid-Century Warrior: A Soldier's Journey to Korea* is 54 years in the making. MacDonald's memoir offers a detailed account of his odyssey in the armed forces – a journey that began with his fraudulent, voluntary enlistment in the Army at age 17 in 1950, and led to an honorable discharge with various medals and ribbons in 1953.

MacDonald's book tells the tale of a warrior who "scammed" the Army into believing he had parental permission to enlist at age 17. In fact, he enlisted in the army with a carefully-crafted plan involving a female friend who posed as his mother to give consent, and forged his mother's name on official documents. Why, one may wonder, would someone go to all the trouble of deliberately getting into the war, when other men attempted to avoid it? MacDonald's answer to this question is clear:

I come from a Clan of Warriors going back centuries. I have to prove myself and come up to the standards of my family. My country needs me, now. Can I do it? I finally thought, I will make it and do my best and that is all anyone can ask; I will give it my all for three years and see where I end up (p. viii).

Thus, this mid-century warrior began his journey to Korea, and detailed the "hurry up and wait" experiences of his basic training as well as his advanced training as part of a tank crew. Though the seriousness of MacDonald's service in combat is described, the book is peppered with recollections of humorous, memorable experiences – from the passed-out drunk Sergeant who is finishing his career sleeping on springs in the barracks, to the inebriated colonel's wife who spends a night

at the veteran's hospital because she is in no shape to go home. All of these stories are told with MacDonald's matter-of-fact narration and sometimes wry sense of humor.

However, the true intensity of MacDonald's service in Korea is evident throughout the middle of the book, as he details the nuances of his work in the confines of the tanks. It is clear that firing missions inside a tank for hours each day is taxing and dangerous, and, as he notes:

...lead to over the top fatigue. While you are doing your duty in combat you are so preoccupied with getting everything right and not letting your buddies down, that stress and anxiety does not affect you. As soon as the shooting stops, and you take a break for a drink of water, food, and refreshments, it hits you, and drains your energy like a water spigot turned on, just pouring out of you (p. 52).

He offers other insights into various aspects of his experiences that the average reader, unless also a combat veteran, just can not imagine. MacDonald describes the seemingly unexplainable ability to distinguish between artillery in order to get some rest:

In combat, one soon became savvy to the enemy incoming versus the friendly outgoing and I for one could go off to sleep as soon as my head hit the sleeping bag; but, send in some rounds from the enemy and I was awake before the round hit near me and making sure I was still in the tank or in a bunker to give me protection. We often discussed how naturally this came about in combat and that there was no way one could train for the difference in sounds nor could you explain it to new men. They had to work this out themselves to survive (p. 63).

After his combat experiences and his 18-month recuperation from combat wounds, MacDonald returned stateside and began another journey — getting married and raising four children, earning two college degrees, and establishing a successful business career until retiring to Florida. This warrior's tale is told with insight and clarity, and makes the book a good read.

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After the Korean War began, Lyell arrived in Korea with his brother Herbert Brown. They were assigned to different units and went their separate ways as severe bottles raged. Sometime later, Lyell was in charge of retrieving bodies of dead soldiers from the battle near Chulwon Reservoir, where U.S. troops were engaged in heavy fighting that produced many casualties.

In the middle of this confusing battleground, Lyell saw something that he should not have seen. Until they landed in Busan, Herbert had comforted his little brother by saying, "It's going to be all right, for the Lord is with us." Now, Lyell had to fall back on those words for comfort.

The body of Herbert already felt cold—as cold as the tears that would roll down Lyell's cheeks years hence as he remembered his brother. For this was the last time he ever saw his brother.

Herbert's body was not carried back to the States during the war. The only thing sent home was the news of his death. Lyell vowed to carry a bit more than that home from his return.

Once he discovered his brother's name on the wall of the museum, he copied it by sliding a pencil over it with trembling hand, while tears of sadness rolled down his cheeks. At last, Lyell had the chance to reconnect with his brother, albeit it by reading his name on the wall of the war museum that he had wished for so long to visit. He was not alone in this group of nine veterans and their spouses.

These veterans were carefully screened by the Cayuga/Syracuse Presbytery (Gail Banks, Moderator), which has an International Mission Partnership with the Pyongyang Presbytery. Their desire to return to the land in which they had fought for freedom demonstrates their continued commitment to the people of Korea—and shows what their colleagues have known for so long: there are still many Korean War veterans who would like to visit Korea

"Brother, I came now. I have missed you very much."

Thanks to John Barwinczok and Lyell Brown for submitting this story