

Korean War Documentary Tells Stories of Disabled Veterans



By Thom Wilborn

More than 6.8 million men and women served in the U.S. armed forces during the Korean War. During the three-year war, 54,000 Americans died, including more than 36,000 on the battlefield. It was a war that has become known for the fact that the service, dedication, and sacrifice of veterans have been so thoroughly forgotten by our nation.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Korean War, the DAV has been involved in producing an hour-long documentary film telling the stories of Korean War veterans in riveting and compelling interviews. The program, *Remembering Korea: The Forgotten*

War, is scheduled to be broadcast nationwide on the Public Broadcasting System this fall and will be partially funded by DAV's National Service Foundation. National Productions, Inc., of Washington, D.C., is producing the documentary. "This is a program that not only tells the compelling history of the Korean War and the sacrifice our of veterans, it also shows how these men and women continued to make significant contributions to our nation after the war," DAV National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson said. "Most of the men and women featured in the program are DAV members, including Past National Commander Andrew A. Kistler."

The program also includes interviews

with DAV Department of New Jersey Commander Robert H. Yancey, Sr., Gen. Raymond Davis, USMC-Ret., a DAV member who received the Medal of Honor, Richard Bernard, former DAV Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, and George Kritzman, the subject of a 1951 DAV documentary produced during the Korean War which told the story of how a wounded veteran overcame his injuries to continue making contributions to our nation. The 1951 documentary *One Came Home*, which tells Mr. Kritzman's story, was nominated for an Academy Award.

Among other notable Korean War veterans appearing in the program are Astronauts former U.S. Senator John Glenn,

Buzz Aldrin, and Wally Schirra, former Secretary of State James A. Baker III, Senator John W. Warner (R-Va.), U.S. Representatives. Sam Johnson (R-Texas) and Charles B. Rangel (D-N.Y.), noted writer David Hackworth, baseball Hall of Famer Ted Williams, Col. Ruby Bradley, the most decorated woman in U.S. Army history, actors Dean Jones and Robert Prosky, and entertainer Willie Nelson.

Sadly, Medal of Honor recipient Col. Carl L. Sitter, USMC-Ret., died three weeks after being interviewed for the program. At the time of his death, Col. Sitter, 77, was a graduate student at Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Va. He was posthumously awarded his Master of Arts in Christian Education on May 28, 2000.

In the program, DAV Past National Commander Kistler tells the story of how both of his legs were blown off by a land mine, ending his promising career as a professional baseball player. Included is the parallel story of Chris Farlekas, the Army medic who was determined that Mr. Kistler would not die.

"We are very pleased that such a notable list of Korean War veterans agreed to tell their stories on camera for this documentary," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman. "They clearly demonstrate that the men and women who served during the Korean War upheld the honor of our nation and made great sacrifices in defense of freedom."

The program also depicts the Korean War through the use of combat artwork



held by the Department of Defense, the various armed services, Col. Charles Waterhouse, and other collections. Also included are personal photographs taken by program participants, most of which have never been seen before by a mass audience.


"One clear pattern that has emerged from the documentary," Mr. Gorman said, "was that our nation evolved a great deal after Korea. The war certainly marked the beginning of the end for communism, but it also marked the beginning of other great events—such as the concept of limited war, integration of our society, the United States' rise to superpower status, and the first footsteps of the conquest of space."

"Historians have called the Korean War the most dangerous war in the history of the world," National Adjutant Wilson said. "The men and women who served there,

and supported those on the battlefield, did so at great cost. Andy Kistler and Dick Bernard both lost their legs, Gen. Brad Smith of Task Force Smith lost nearly half his men fighting greatly superior forces in the first U.S. battle at Osan, and others continue to carry the painful scars of that war today." Gen. Smith, U.S. Army-Ret., also appears in the program.

"We tried to tell their stories against the backdrop of history," Mr. Gorman said. "One cannot tell a story of war without the men and women who served. It was their war and their dreams that were smashed by the horror and agony that was battle."

The program traces the heroism, dedication, and sacrifice of veterans from the first battle at Osan, through the defense of the Pusan perimeter, the Inchon invasion, the Chinese intervention, the horrors of Kunu-Ri and Chosin Reservoir, and the stalemate of the truce talks. Each event is discussed by participants, including ground and air combat action. The program includes a discussion of the contributions made by African-American units, nurses, and vital support personnel and vividly details the conditions forced on American prisoners of war.

It is important that this history be told and told now while we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Korean War," said DAV National Director of Communications Gary Weaver. Many of the Korean War veterans were also veterans of World War II. Some day those stories will be lost forever, but *Remembering Korea: The Forgotten War*, will always exist so that the Korean War will no longer be "the forgotten war." 



United States Representative Charles B. Rangel (D-N.Y.), left, talks with DAV Assistant National Legislative Director for Medical Affairs Richard A. Wannemacher, Jr., prior to taping an interview for the Korean War documentary.

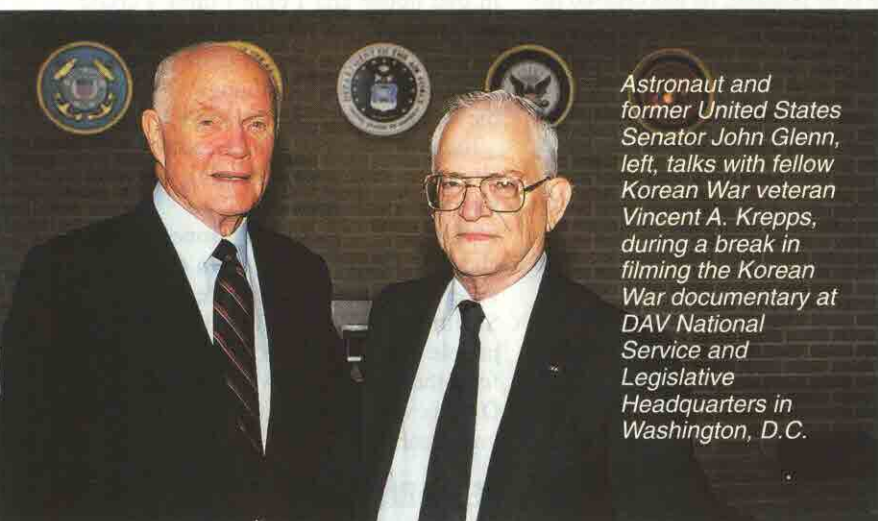


DAV's Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman, left, talks with Medal of Honor recipient Gen. Raymond G. Davis, USMC-Ret. who was among more than 30 Korean War veterans interviewed for the PBS television documentary *Remembering Korea: The Forgotten War*.

DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman, left, greets Korean War veteran, author, and columnist David H. Hackworth as he arrives to be interviewed for the Korean War documentary.



DAV National Director of Communications Gary Weaver, left, talks with baseball Hall of Fame's Ted Williams before an interview. Mr. Williams, whose baseball career was interrupted by military service during World War II and the Korean War, was a U.S. Marine Corps pilot.



Astronaut and former United States Senator John Glenn, left, talks with fellow Korean War veteran Vincent A. Krepps, during a break in filming the Korean War documentary at DAV National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C.



Korean War veteran pilot and former astronaut Buzz Aldrin, left, is welcomed to DAV's Washington Headquarters by DAV National Legislative Director Joseph A. Violante.

Garthwaite Nominated VA Health Chief

President Clinton has nominated Dr. Thomas L. Garthwaite as VA Under Secretary for Health. In that capacity, Dr. Garthwaite will serve as the chief executive officer for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), responsible for the operation of the nation's largest integrated health care system. Since January 1995, Dr. Garthwaite has served as Deputy Under Secretary for Health or chief operating officer.

The nomination of Dr. Garthwaite will fill a vacuum that had threatened treatment for America's sick and disabled veterans," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman. "It is vital that the Senate act swiftly to confirm the nomination so that Dr. Garthwaite can fulfill the vital role of setting program priorities and provide the leadership essential for a strong, vital veterans health care system."

Dr. Kenneth W. Kizer, who served as Under Secretary for Health for four and one-half years, had his nomination for a second term withdrawn in June 1999.

Dr. Garthwaite received his undergraduate degree at Cornell University and was awarded his medical degree from Temple University. He completed his internship and residency at the Medical College of Wisconsin Affiliated Hospitals before joining the VA in 1976. Dr. Garthwaite's VA career includes nearly 20 years of experience as a physician and clinical administrator at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center. He served as the medical center's Chief of Staff for eight years.



Dr. Garthwaite