

**By Matthew D. Keenan**

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Tom Brokaw, in his book "The Greatest Generation," quotes historian John Keegan for the proposition that the Second World War "is the largest single event in human history, fought across six of the world's seven continents, and all its oceans. It killed 50 million human beings, left hundreds of millions others wounded in mind or body, and materially devastated much of the heartland of civilization." Brokaw notes that, for these soldiers, every day for four years or more "they knew, intensely, great danger, separation, death, heroism, uncertainty, accomplishment, and cruelty."

This article is dedicated to 19 men who experienced every bit of the emotional continuum described by Brokaw. Kansas lawyers all, with ages ranging from 83 to 90. All retired save one, living across the country, and sharing a common experience – serving on behalf of our country in World War II. They are, identified by age, the following:

Tom Boone, 83	Arnold Nye, 86
Charles Svoboda, 83	Donald Patterson, 86
Glenn Opie, 84	Lester Arvin, 87
Wayne Probasco, 84	Aubrey Bradley, Jr., 87
Edwin Wheeler, 84	Robert Bates, 88
G. Taylor Hess, 85	Alfred Holl, 89
C. Stanley Nelson, 85	Richard Rogers, 89
John Bausch, 85	Glee Smith, 89
Emerson Shields, 85	William Mullins, Jr., 90
Robert Green, 86	

What started with a series of questionnaires to all Kansas Bar members born in 1930 or before, something I named the "Legacy Project," has grown into this. And for those other World War II veterans out there that I've missed, please send me your biographical information for inclusion in a forthcoming issue.

Beyond serving the country, and joining the Kansas bar, these 19 share a few other things: They have been married for an average of 60 years to the same woman, they joined the service at ages ranging from 18 to 15 (John Bausch), and they shared adventures no one could possibly foresee. They leapt into history, traveled halfway around the world, and asked no questions about what awaited them.

Most were born into a world defined by county lines, not country borders. All that changed on December 7, 1941. With the future of the world in the balance, they said their goodbyes and left.

Whether it's Stan Nelson in the Marines, Bill Mullins in the Army, or Aubrey Bradley and Emerson Shields in the Air Force – here are their stories. Some retired as brigadier general (William Mullins), others captain (Edwin Wheeler), and a few more as staff sergeant (Wayne Probasco) or tech sergeant (C. Stanley Nelson).

Tom Brokaw stated that these historical events gave us "the greatest generation any society has ever produced. ... These men and women fought not for fame and recognition, but because it was the right thing to do. When they came back they rebuilt America into a superpower."

For these 19 Kansans, one can reach no other conclusion.

### FOOTNOTE

1. I wish to express my appreciation to my secretary, Sarah Hongerlout, for her hard work in helping put this collection together.

## THOMAS C. BOONE, AGE: 83

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1956

Military Experience: U.S. Navy (1945-46)

**My Story:** I am a Naval veteran having served in the 7th Fleet in the Southwest Pacific. I was in route from the Great Lakes Naval Training Center to Okinawa preparing for the invasion and occupation of Japan at the time the atomic bomb was dropped and the war ended. I was rerouted to the Philippines where I served the balance of my enlistment.



**Thomas C. Boone**

**Personal:** I married at the age of 23. My wife and I have two children and one adopted daughter: Sarah Rebekkah, who teaches English and French in Saudi Arabia, Caleb is an attorney, and Rachel is completing her master's in English this year. Rachel was, literally, left by her mother on my doorstep at age 2 months.

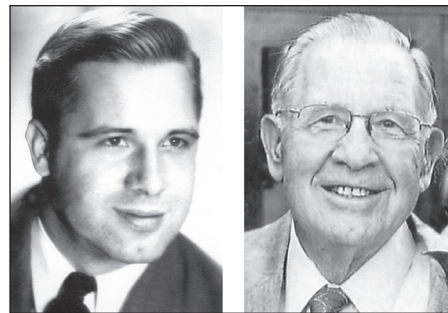
## CHARLES R. SVOBODA, AGE: 83

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1951

Military Experience: U.S. Navy Air Corps (1945-47)  
Aviation Cadet

**My Story:** Charles R. Svoboda, age 83, and a veteran of World War II, graduated from high school at Lawrence at 17 years of age. With WWII in full swing, being drafted was imminent. I had always wanted to fly and the Navy Air Corps was seeking applicants in Kansas City. A month before my high school graduation, I came to Kansas City to apply, and I spent five days taking tests, mental, psychological, physical, and intelligence. I succeeded in passing and was sworn in as an aviation cadet the following week. We were required to have three semesters of college before flight training, and I was ordered to report to the University of Notre Dame in July a month after my graduation to satisfy that requirement.



**Charles R. Svoboda**

Having completed the three semesters by the following July, I was then ordered to Naval Air Station Dallas for flight training where I served until reporting for the next stage of training in mid January. However, fortunately the atomic bomb had been dropped on Japan and the war was over. I say fortunately, because I later found out that our mission was to be

the advance d-strike force for the invasion of Japan, with estimated casualties of 85 percent for our flight group.

With the war being over and the large number of fighter pilots in the Navy, a Navy career did not appear promising, and despite the fact that I had signed on to serve eight years, the Navy permitted me to resign and I was honorably discharged. My home being Lawrence, I enrolled at Kansas University's School of Engineering.

Three semesters later, because of a good grade average, I was invited to join Tau Beta Pi (the engineering equivalent of Phi Beta Kappa) and Pi Tau Sigma, an honorary mechanical engineering fraternity. Because of the large number of returning war veterans enrolling, an increase of faculty members was required, and because of my grades, I was asked to teach some engineering courses my senior year. Upon graduation from the engineering school, I decided to enroll in KU's Law School, and graduated two years later in 1951. I continued teaching in the engineering school during the two years while I was in law school. My two years in law school presented a problem when the law school dean was reviewing my record for graduation although I met the academic requirements, there was a except for the six semester residency requirement so I filed a request for a waiver, which was granted. I took the Kansas Bar exam in September 1951, passed and was admitted. I then took the Missouri Bar exam in October, passed and was admitted in November 1951.

**Personal:** Married 60 years, January 27, 1951, to Margaret Jean with five children: Nancy (attorney), Jimmy, Bill, Michael, and Ann. I have been a trial lawyer for 55 years utilizing my education in engineering, specializing in construction, technical, and tort litigation in many state and federal jurisdictions and the Court of Federal Claims. I have held an AV pre-eminent rating with Martindale Hubbell for legal ability and ethical standards for more than 30 years.

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### GLENN OPIE, AGE: 84

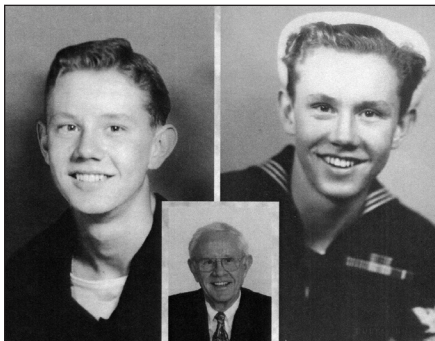
Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1954

Military Experience: U.S. Navy (1944-46)

Radioman, 2nd Class

**My Story:** I remember radio and December 7, 1941. I was a 15-year-old at Great Bend High School at the time and was a newspaper carrier for the Great Bend Tribune. I believe it



Glenn Opie

was a first for Great Bend – newsboys selling “extras” on street corners: “Read all about it ... Japs attack Pearl Harbor.” The following year, I would be recruited by the Navy for its V-12 Officers Program. I was rejected because I didn't have

20/20 eyesight at the time, but still ended up, in May, at Great Lakes Navy (Boot) Training Camp.

Before that, however, nearly all of us high school boys were excited over the prospect of being in the service – and it was heightened because some of us worked on building a B-12 Base near Great Bend (a few weeks before we graduated). The enthusiasm, and indeed near euphoria, I had of getting in the Navy was just overwhelming. Nearly all high school grads just couldn't wait to serve. Now some of us going into the service are applauded because of our bravery. Actually, I was not in the least brave – I just wasn't smart enough to relate to what could happen to me; it was going to be a great adventure.

Navy boot camp, as it impacts a high school boy, is just hard to describe ... lot's of drilling, learning how to handle a rifle, hand-to-hand combat, etc., were just a few matters I could hardly comprehend. However, in addition to learning about serving aboard a ship, because I could type, a part of my duties involved my employment as a secretary for the Catholic and Lutheran chaplains serving our company of recruits. I also sang Sundays in the Great Lakes Navy Blue Jacket Choir (about 400 men), but they were strong enough to overcome my presence. It was “really something” to sing with this group, many of whom were opera stars or professional musicians.

After boot camp and an aptitude test, I was assigned to Navy Radio School in Los Angeles, where we learned international Morse code (dits and das). Now for a country high school kid from Nowhere, Kansas, all of a sudden finding himself an implant in Los Angeles, was just mindboggling. I had been to a few high school dances, but The Hollywood Canteen was sort of like heaven, and not just girls (millions of them), but Hollywood actresses.

I was assigned to a ship in the South Pacific, but the trip from Los Angeles was an incredible ordeal. At least 7,000 men were aboard and most were seasick for days. I remember a Marine security sentry aboard the ship was trying to force a near comatose sailor to stand watch, but he simply could not stand up. The Marine threatened to shoot him for insubordination; the man couldn't even raise his head. He simply told the Marine, “Do it (shoot me now).” Of course, that wouldn't have happened. I had never seen hundreds of people throwing up over each other.

I was a radio operator for the destroyer USS Meade DD 602. We were operating out of the Philippines on maneuvers soon to be part of the task force to invade Japan. My job was to transcribe Morse code, which would be decoded, providing use operations orders.

One evening after having been on patrol for several days, our ship was anchored in Leyte Harbor with many other ships. That evening, one of the ships made its stern a makeshift theater and before “Bring on the Girls” was getting ready to play, a lonely pyrotechnic crawled into the horizon and, within two or three minutes, the entire sky seemed as bright as the sun. The hundreds of ships in the area were emptying their flares and rockets; the atomic bomb had been dropped. We were of course far from the site, but the main radio on the ship went crazy. Only the radio operators could provide war bulletins because only we could turn the jumbles of dits and das into words; we published several extra editions of war bulletins.

Our ship was in a huge typhoon in 1946 that tore the bow off the Cruise Pittsburg. Our captain got me out of bed in the



middle of the night to send an encoded message (which I later found out expressed his worry that we might be sunk by the raging seas). During the trip home the commodore wanted to deep sea fish, so he stopped five ships for an hour or so and everyone (who had a rod or reel) fished. After a few hours of fishing and heading toward the Panama Canal, we were in one of the worst storms ever encountered by the Meade (according to the old-timers).

I regard my two years in the Navy as doing much growing up. My sleeping area aboard the ship was in its stern. About 50 or 60 of the communications division were billeted in "sardine closeness." Below where I slept were approximately 40 or so depth charges; just in front of our sleeping quarters were two extra torpedoes and a few feet toward amidships, several tons of 5-inch shells. I told my parents not to worry about having to make any funeral arrangements, that if our ship was hit during the night, there wouldn't be enough of me left to feed the fish.

Our ship played a very small part in bringing Japan to surrender. I never dreamed we would be so close to oblivion about 65 years later – today.

**Personal:** Married 51 years to his wife, Sandra. They have two sons, Harlan, who is a surgeon in Olathe, and Robin, who works for a company called Data Logistics. They also have four grandchildren, Tristan, Eden, Bennett, and Logan. He still practices probate and trust law in Great Bend. Opie is a member and past president of the Barton County Bar Association, earned the Kansas Bar Association's Outstanding Service Award in 1973-74, serves as fund campaign chair of the Jack Kilby Memorial Plaza, and is an elected member of the Drum Corps International Hall of Fame and Great Bend High School Hall of Fame.

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#### WAYNE PROBASCO, AGE: 84

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1951

Military Experience: U.S. Army Air Corps (1943-46)  
Staff Sergeant

**My Story:** In 1943, I was 17 years old and a senior in high school. I was anxious to get into the service and enlisted in the Army Air Corps Reserve. Nine days after my 18th birthday – January 13, 1944 – I was inducted into the Air Force.



Shortly thereafter, I graduated from the Air Force aerial gunnery school and was assigned as a right gunner crew member on a B-29 plane. Our crew was highly trained, having drilled consistently for almost a year. We had been issued all our combat gear and were in the staging area in California, ready to go overseas and do our share of bombing. The day before we left for Okinawa, the first atomic bomb was dropped. We proceeded to Okinawa, but, as you can well imagine, the war was over. I was discharged in April 1946.

**Personal:** He has been married to Lou Bjorgaard Probasco for 25 years. They have four children: Paula Freeman, of Castle Rock, Colo.; Jeff Probasco, of McKinney, Texas; Kristi Hellmuth, of Mason Neck, Va.; and Jennifer Massengale, of Frisco, Texas. I was a staff sergeant when discharged.

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#### EDWIN M. WHEELER, AGE: 84

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1955

Military Experience: U.S. Army (1944-47)

2nd Lieutenant (1945-46), 1st Lieutenant (1947-1952),

Captain (Honorable discharge, 1952)

#### From the Sarasota Herald Tribune:

"I volunteered on the first call after I graduated from Marion High School in 1944. I was commissioned as second lieutenant in the U.S. Army before I was 19. It's one of my early accomplishments of which I am very proud.



**Edwin M. Wheeler**

From 1944 to 1946, I went to Europe. When I got to Germany, President Harry Truman was under tremendous pressure to bring the troops home. So we were the guys that were coming in. There was plenty of indication at the time that our allies weren't going to be our allies much longer, and, of course, they weren't.

For the moment, they said they were going to assign me to the baking unit, and I didn't know anything about baking. They took me under their wing and I learned from the masters. At one time, we were shipping 10,000 pounds of bread per week. It was a great experience for me.

After 1946, I joined the Reserve and, in 1950, I was called to active duty and sent to Korea as a platoon leader in Company L, 35th Regiment, 25th Division. I was wounded there and evacuated. I received the Presidential Unit Citation, the Combat Infantry Badge, the Purple Heart, and the Korean Presidential Citation.

It was much different for me in Korea than it was in World War II. I got to Korea in July 1951, and the Army had been there for about a year. Everything was blown flat. The poor Koreans were living in ditches and rice patties.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur wanted to cross the river in Northern Korea and eventually invade China, and Truman wasn't going to have any part of that. China already had 1 billion people vs. 150 million Americans. It was a no-win situation.

Thought I was going to be assigned to a combat unit because, after all, in World War II, I never heard a shot fired. We were on a line that was established parallel to the 38th parallel, across the peninsula, in Korea. The Turkish brigade was on one side of us and the Second Division was on the other side.

Peace treaty talks were beginning there, so the Army was frozen in this position where we were to hold a line only if attacked. At about 11 p.m., they hit us head on. The Presidential Citation said that two divisions hit us. One round exploded so great and hit the corner of a roof on our foxhole and

swung 6- and 10-inch logs down on top of us. I knew I'd been hit because I could feel blood on my uniform.

The men in my platoon helped get the logs off of us and put me in storage in another depot that hadn't been hit.

I guess the battle lasted the better part of an hour or an hour and a half, but they didn't break our line."

**Personal:** Edwin and his wife, Rosalie, were married on September 30, 1950, and have celebrated 60 years together. They have two sons: Ed, Jr., in Marion, and Chris, in Washington, D.C.

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### JOHN BAUSCH, AGE: 85

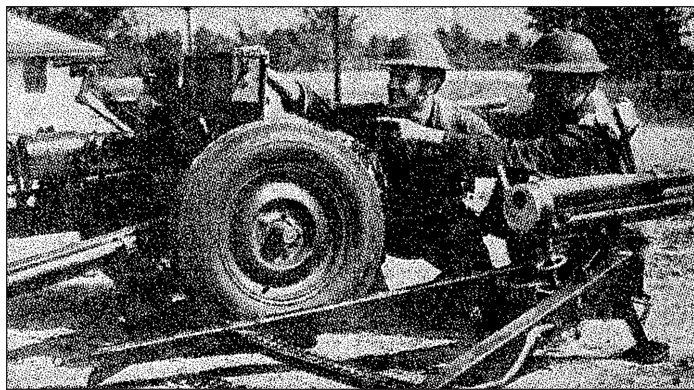
Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1950

Military Experience: Kansas National Guard (1940-45)

35th Infantry Division

As reported in the Topeka Capital-Journal in July 1964, John Bausch's service to our country started when he was only 15 years old:



**Henry Bausch, right, points at a small artillery piece, while his son, John Bausch watches.**

The story begins back when John was 6 years old and his father, Henry J. Bausch, was a first sergeant with the Kansas National Guard. The father's outfit was the anti-tank company, 137th Regiment of the 35th Division. Henry Bausch even got into the service at the tail end of World War I.

Young John began going to summer camp with the National Guard when he was 6. "I was sort of a mascot," he explains.

John Bausch began his sophomore year at Topeka High School in September 1940. He quit December 15. He fudged on his age, telling the Guard he was 18, when he was a tender 15 years old, in order to go with his father when the outfit was called into service.

"We were only supposed to be in service for one year and I planned to go back and finish high school," says John. However, the one year stretched to five, and John and his father served first in the United States and then went through five campaigns in the European Theater during World War II. Two of those campaigns were crucial ones ... the battle of St. Lo and the famous Battle of the Bulge.

In July 1941, Congress extended the one-year commitment for all servicemen from one year to 30 months. This, of course, was not well received by the troops. However, the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, extended everyone's service for the duration of the war. On December

7, 1941, several of my buddies and I had been in Little Rock, Ark., on a weekend pass. About noon or so we walked into the Citizens Pool Hall in downtown Little Rock where we generally waited to catch the bus back to camp. The bus stop was about half of a block from the pool hall. The radios were telling all of the 35th Infantry men to report to their units.

Within two weeks we were in Fort Ord, Calif. Rumors had it that we were going to be shipped to the Philippines to support General MacArthur's troops but, as history reveals, this would have been a lost cause because of the strength of the Japanese army in the Far East at that time. The 35th Division trained in various camps in California, Alabama, and North Carolina and finally arrived in England in early 1944. The Division crossed the English Channel in 30 days after D-Day.

I'd like to elaborate on the 35th Division's actions after going ashore in Normandy, France in July, 1944. When we went into action we were facing a strong German defensive position in the area of St. Lo, France. This had been kind of a stalemate for a week or so after the D-Day divisions had advanced inward. Progress was very slow. In order to break this stalemate and capture St. Lo, the Army Air Force bombed St. Lo with 3,000 bombers, B-17s, B-25s, and B-24s. This was not a routine method of assaulting enemy strong points but it enabled our infantry troops to capture St. Lo and move on to the East towards central France.

After the capture of St. Lo by the 30th Infantry Division and a regiment of the 35th, the 35th Division was assigned to General Patton's 3rd Army. The 3rd Army advanced eastward through central France with armored and infantry divisions leading the way. Two of the well-recognized armored divisions were the 4th and the 6th, but there were others who contributed greatly to this drive across France. We liberated the cities of Orleans, Sans Troyes, and Nancy, France, with little opposing resistance. The Air Force with its P-51s and P-47s were overhead strafing the Germans and their vehicles as they retreated to the East.

The 35th stayed with Patton's 3rd Army and advanced to the Saar Valley. In December 1944, we were in Sargomines, Germany. On December 16, 1944, the Germans advanced out of the Ardennes Forest which then led to the battle commonly referred to as the "Battle of the Bulge." As a part of Patton's 3rd Army, we were pulled out of the Saar Valley region immediately and advanced to the north to attack the southern edge of the Bulge.

The Battle of the Bulge was the last effort on the part of the Germans to force a deadlock and led to negotiations for post-war peace. Thereafter, U.S. troops advanced to the East and stopped on the Elbe River. That's where the 35th was at the end of the European war on May 8, 1945.

After the war in Europe had ceased, the 35th Division was scheduled to return to the U.S. for 30 days for rest and reorganization and then designated to deploy to the Pacific Theater of operations to participate in the land invasion of the Japanese mainland, which was to commence in November 1945. However, President Truman ordered the dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in July/August 1945 and this then ended all hostilities with the Japanese Empire. We were in the port of embarkation zone in France when this Pacific war ended.



Our Division arrived back in the U.S. in September 1945. I was discharged on September 7, 1945, at the rank of Sergeant at Fort Leavenworth.

**Personal:** John and Mary have been married 56 years. They have three children: Sarah Benson, of Denver, Susan Morriss, of Holton, and Steve Bausch, of Denver.

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### G. TAYLOR HESS, AGE: 85

Kansas Lawyer

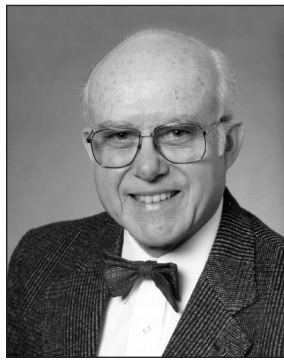
Admitted: 1953

Military Experience:

U.S. Army (1944-46), Reserve (1946-49)

Surgical Technician

**My Story:** I was a pre-med student at Harvard University in 1943 when I got drafted into the U.S. Army. I was sent to a camp in Massachusetts and sent for a student program to become



for officer training in Fort Benning, Ga., program was disbanded and I was sent to Fort Jackson in South Carolina for infantry. Afterwards, I joined an artillery unit in Camp Gordon in Augusta, Ga., and began another round of basic training as a medic with field artillery.

We were transported from Boston to LaHavre, France, and assembled in Rouen. We went into action shooting across the Rhine River using shells to hit the panzer tanks

(German), at times at point-blank range. We moved across the Rhine with the corps artillery, not assigned to a particular company but to an army (we were attached to three armies), crossed southern Germany, and at the end of the war ended up in Czechoslovakia, lucky in that they kept moving. There was one occasion our unit was replaced with another artillery outfit and they got clobbered!

Here is an excerpt from a letter I wrote May 14, 1945 – “somewhere in Germany”:

You have been in the dark about me since before Easter. When we left our chateau near Fontaine la Bourg we spent our first night in Cambrai, France. Then on to Maesterich, Holland for another night. Our first large city that we saw (just the skeleton) in Germany was Julich. Then on to Bad-burg where the school was where we stayed the next night – Easter eve. Then we went north of Krefeld and fired on Duisburg – our first shells on the enemy. We moved south through Krefeld and fired on Dusseldorf. It was in the remains of Krefeld that I had that wonderful bath I wrote you about. We then made a long trip through Cologne and Bonn, crossing the Rhine on the General Hodges bridge (pontoon) in Bad Gotesburg and then on to Siegen for a night. Another day found us wandering through the mountains around Winterberg and landing at Ludenscheid beside the hospital. We had been a little delayed here arriving in the afternoon after the Germans had just been cleared out in the morning. Even while we were there we could watch infantry clearing out snipers in the other part of town across on another hill. It was in this position we got some counter battery fire – 88s.

You could hear the shells coming for over a minute. Everyone really scattered when they started to land and very few slept outside of foxholes that night. The shells landed several hundred yards away from us – on the other side of the hospital so no one was hurt.

... This afternoon I got my first shower there since I left the chateau in France. Boy was it wonderful! You had as long as you wanted instead of a 6 minute limit back at the QM shower outfit in France. The blossoms are falling on our tent like snow now – the weather is delightful and I am getting a tan. I played a little volley ball just before mail call. It is after 11:00 now so I better quit.

We didn't suffer many casualties – mostly accidents. A truck would get stuck and they'd have to use special equipment to pull something very heavy. I'd ride in the ammunition truck. There was another incident when we were occupying an area where the Germans left; some of the men found weapons, a pistol, and two men shot themselves in the finger.

After the war was over, I was in the army of occupation (I was in the XII corps men's chorus touring Germany to entertain troops). I spent one semester in the University of London School of Economics and Political Science. Harry Laski was the instructor, a famous socialist. Afterwards I returned to South Germany near the Swiss border and the next day I was sent home to New Jersey, where I was discharged. I went back to Harvard University and graduated in 1949, and married my wife, Jane, on August 1, 1952. She was in Boston attending Katie Gibbs School after graduating from Carleton College.

I received my LLB/JD from the University of Pennsylvania in 1953, had a general law practice in my hometown, Uniontown, Penn., and was general counsel for Susquehanna Broadcasting Co. in York, Penn., for 10 years. I then moved to Kansas in 1969 to serve as attorney for United Utilities, which became Sprint, retiring in 1988. I am a member of the Johnson County, Kansas, Pennsylvania, and American bar associations.

**Personal:** Married to Margaret Jane Kirkpatrick for 59 years. They have four children: Paul Taylor, George Kirkpatrick, John Hibbs, and Margaret Gwendolyn.

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### C. STANLEY NELSON, AGE: 85

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1951

Military Experience: U.S. Marines (1943-46)

Tech Sergeant

**My Story:** In May 1943, I had finished my freshman year at Kansas University, just turned 18, and in August, joined the Marines and went to San Diego boot camp, went to various schools around the country to become a radio-radar ground tech in the Marine air corps. In late 1944, I joined a fighter plane squadron of F4U Corsairs on Engebi, a small island somewhere in the Pacific – after the United States captured IE Shima, an island (where Ernie Pyle, well-known war correspondent had been killed) off the coast of Okinawa. Our squadron moved to the air base there to help our troops, using fire bombs, rockets, and machine guns to kill the Japanese who were holed up in caves in the hills of Okinawa.

I was not involved in any combat, but Japanese planes occasionally sneaked in at night, under the radar, and dropped

bombs killing some guys in the squadron next to us – after the United States captured Okinawa, our squadron moved there and started preparing for the eventual attack on Japan; in Sep-



**C. Stanley Nelson**

– after the Japanese had surrendered to the United States, our squadron moved up to the main island of Japan and occupied a Japanese navy/air base at Sasebo – while there I became basketball coach of the squadron (I was too little to play in high school, but thought that since I had watched Phog Allen conduct a lot of basketball practices at Kansas University, sure, I should be coach) – because we had some good players who also knew a lot more about basketball than I did, we won the base championship and since we weren't doing much except just occupying Japan, the team flew down to Okinawa to play the island champion team – I learned pretty quickly that I didn't know much about basketball and I hadn't prepared our team because we got beat badly, partly because there we played on outdoor basketball courts where it was hot, and we had been playing in old hangars due to the cold and snow in Japan – actually we were lucky we got beat because the winning team went on to play in China and I would have been delayed getting home as soon as I did – after a month's leave, I was discharged in May 1946 and benefitted greatly from those three years of growing up.

**Personal:** Married for 58 years to Rosemary who died in 2008. They have four children: Steve, 59, Jeff, 55, Mike, 54, and Kendal, 47. Stan reports that at 85, he still greatly enjoys going to work every day as of counsel for Hampton & Royce in Salina.

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### EMERSON SHIELDS, AGE: 85

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: June 27, 1951

Military Experience: U.S. Air Force (1943-46),

Reserve (1946-50)

1st Lieutenant

**My Story:** On December 7, 1941, I was attending a Walter League rally at the Lyon's Creek Lutheran Church close to Herington, Kan. The news of Pearl Harbor was given by the ministers and leaders of the meeting in a very serious and solemn conviction. Being only 17 years of age, I felt that the war would all be over before I would have to go.

I graduated from Lincolnville High School, Lincolnville, Kan., in May 1942, and in September 1942, registered for the draft. I had always intended to become a civil engineer and someday build the Pan American highway from Alaska to Argentina. I enrolled in Emporia State College, Emporia, in the fall of 1942 and started taking the basic courses for a civil engineer's degree.

Since I was only 18 years of age, I had to secure my parents' consent to enlist in the Army Air Corps Student Program. One weekend in early October of 1942, my brother Ivan and I went home and Ivan convinced my parents that they should consent to my enlistment in the Army Air Corp

Deferment Program, which they did. Ivan had already enlisted in the Air Corps Student Program. When February 1943 rolled around Ivan and I both were called to active duty. I believe Ivan was called to active duty on February 17, 1943, and I believe my report date was February 23, 1943, only four days later.



**Emerson Shields**

I had to report to Jefferson Barracks, Mo. (near St. Louis), and it was cold there, as it was close to the banks of the Mississippi River. We lived in square buildings that were built like chicken houses. I don't believe we had a stove in our building. This was basic training for all of us as soldiers. We were there until early March when I was sent to Carroll College, Waukesha, Wis. We had classes there in math, geography and history for five months. My mother came to see me at Waukesha as she thought I was soon going to war. In August, I was put on a Troop Train to Santa Anna, Calif. Some way I found out that the train was going through Newton, so I notified my parents and they met me there for about a half hour while the troop train changed crews.

When we arrived at Santa Anna, Calif., we immediately went into the cadet classification program. I was classified as a pilot. We then had a six week cadet ground school training program. In September 1943, I was sent to Santa Maria, Calif., to a primary flight school in Stearman biplane trainers; this was a private flight school called "Hancock College Aeronautics." That plane had landing gears close together. You had to fly the plane in a crab or cross control the stick and rudder to keep the plane from ground looping on a cross wind landing. The instructor threatened to wash me out if I couldn't make a correct crosswind landing.

The first time my instructor took me a for a ride in the Stearman, he had me ride in the back seat. He noticed that I acted scared so he did 22 slow rolls one after another. What the instructor didn't know was my safety belt was loose, which held me in on the top of the roll. When we landed I had a gash in my right hand where I was holding on to the frame in the airplane during the slow rolls. After I soloed in the PT-17 my fear of flying diminished.

My next station was basic flight training at Lemoore, Calif. Here we first flew the BT-15, what we called the "Vaultee Vibrator"; I caught on quickly to fly this low winged monoplane. The Army Air Corps decided that they were going to step up the basic flight training by having us fly the twin engine Cessna AT-15 that we called the "Bamboo Bomber." It was constructed principally out of wood and canvas. That was when we started the second half of basic training. That twin engine plane seemed to be no threat to my flying ability. I had no problem in adapting to it. So the 50 of us all got sent to Marfa, Texas, to fly the same "Bamboo Bomber" in advance cadet flight training. On April 15, 1944, I got my wings and went home for a 30-day leave.

The Marfa base had a German prison of war camp without a fence. Three prisoners walked away who were later found dead in the desert from lack of water.

Marfa was noted to be the biggest town in the biggest county in the biggest state in the United States at that time.

Close to our base, a series of lights could be seen at night to the north of our runway. We did not ever hear what they were, but they think they are caused by gas leaking from the ground. Later it was associated with UFO stories.

Elizabeth Taylor's movie "The Giant" was made in Marfa after the war.

We were awarded our wings at Marfa and made 2nd lieutenant or flight officers. Ten percent of the class 44-D were made flight officers and I happened to be one of the unlucky 10 percent.

We were given a 30-day leave. I spent most of my time in Lincolnville. My brother, Fred, and Virginia Brunner planned their wedding while I was on leave, wherein I stood in as best man in uniform. One incident that I remember while on leave was I went to Hillsboro, and I saw German war prisoners walking down the street arm-in-arm with Hillsboro girls eating ice-cream. I wanted to call my commanding officer to stop this practice, but I later cooled off.

Something transpired at Lemoore that I will always remember. The commanding officer called me into his office and showed me an honorable discharge from the service. Since I was 18 years old I could either accept or reject it; I rejected it. My father was a good friend of Sen. Arthur Capper and my father apparently told him I was needed on the farm. However my brother, Fred, was still there with a farming deferment. I felt that if I was discharged, Fred would have to go into the service. I liked flight training and still thought the war would be over before I was ready to go overseas.

After we finished our operational training in January, we were then sent back to Lincoln, Neb., to be sent overseas to England. In late January 1945, I met my parents, my brother, and his wife, Virginia, and gave them the keys to my gray 1936 Ford, which they took home. This was the occasion that I stated to them, that I would come home without a scratch and that was the way it turned out. The next day the crew and I took a train to Camp Kilmer, N.J., where we boarded the "Aquatania" (sister ship to the Lusitania) and were on our way to England. The conditions aboard the ship were not very pleasant, especially for the enlisted men. But the officers got to eat in the ship's dining room twice a day. It took us only seven days to get to Liverpool, England, where we landed. A couple of days in Liverpool, then we were sent to our airbase at Molesworth, England. The 303rd Bomb Group was located there, where its group name was called "Hells Angels." We arrived there on February 5, 1945.

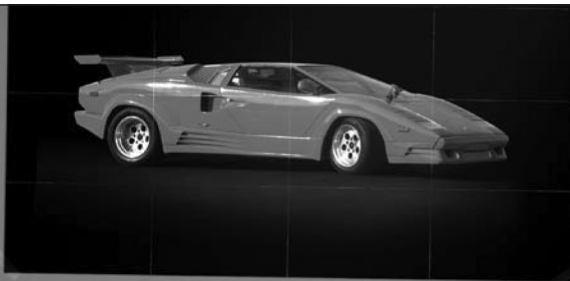
### Radio Silence

On the way to a target on one of my first 10 missions, while all the planes maintained radio silence, we heard a good-speaking American voice say, "What is our target today? I missed briefing." We had briefings before each mission. After about three inquiries, someone in our bomb group said, "You damn Kraut get off the air." That stopped the inquiries.

### Corridor

One of the peculiarities of the war of the 8th Air Force was that the Germans had a corridor in which they let the B-17 formations fly over the Netherlands. The Germans

*(Continued on the next page)*



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allowed only one anti-aircraft battery fire at a time. This battery usually got one B-17 shot down each day, but they never increased the anti-aircraft firings. The theory was that the Germans allowed this because after we flew through the corridor we would turn to the target of the day. The Germans would then alert their fighter aircraft in that area. The pilots in our bomb group would refer to this battery as "Ludwig."

#### Aubrey J. Bradley

It is worth mentioning this story about Aubrey J. Bradley, a Wichita attorney. He was a fellow pilot with me at Kansas University, a B-17 pilot who flew his missions in the 8th Air Force at Deenethorpe. Aubrey met a girl from Kettering, England, close to Deenethorpe Airbase, and got married; they are still married today. Aubrey and I were members of the 442nd Troop Carrier Group at Fairfax, Kansas City, Kan., and then at Olathe Air Base. Aubrey and I flew a C-47 to Burbank, Calif., one Easter weekend and took along 22 KU ROTC friends. We stayed there three days and flew back home. Aubrey and I had a time keeping the airplane level as the passengers were dancing from one end of the plane to the other.

When the Korean War broke out, our Troop Carrier unit was called to active duty, Aubrey went to RAF (Royal Air Force) in Manston but received a partial deferment because I had only six months of law school left. While Aubrey was at the London airbase, two Navy planes crashed overhead and threw burning gasoline on Aubrey and his friend. Aubrey and his friend suffered several burns. The Air Force discharged him four months after the accident.

What record Aubrey had was that he was the only plane to be shot down in the last mission of the 8th Air Force in Europe in April 1945. Aubrey says he flew 32½ missions as he never completed his last mission. Aubrey had to spend the last 10 days of the war in a German prisoner of war camp until the Americans arrived.

**Personal:** Married 59 years to his wife, Jeannette J. Steiner Shields, from Hoisington, Kan. They have three sons: Byron, Russell, and Scott Shields. His rank when discharged was lieutenant. He was a weekend warrior at KU and still practices law in St. John, Kan.

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#### ROBERT M. GREEN, AGE: 86

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1961

Military Experience: U.S. Army

Lieutenant

**My Story:** In the course of my life, I have had many meaningful experiences. Perhaps the most meaningful was Christmas Eve 1944. I do not recall the target or which numbered mission, but it was a dangerous day to be over in Germany. That evening, we were all glad to be home and on the ground again. Eight of the 10-men crew got transportation to take us to a small Protestant "Church of England" at a small town adjoining the airbase. The church was full of people for its Christmas Eve service. We stood up in the back, shoulder to shoulder, for the entire service. Present were three Jews (Ratner and Bill Feinburg – later killed in Germany), three Catholics, and three Protestants. We spoke very little to each other

or anyone else, before or after the service. It was at a time when we all felt the need to say "thanks." The town was Korth Pichenhom. Doesn't that have a good British sound?



**Robert M. Green**

I practiced general probate and real estate law for 50 years and became inactive in June 2002. I became a lawyer because I thought I could be of most assistance to others. Best advice received was to become rich and marry a rich lady. The best advice I can offer is to be prepared, be honest, and do not lose your perspective.

**Personal:** I have a sister, Jane Brown, who was a receptionist for Keith Sambora, attorney for Sedgwick County, later district court judge for more than 20 years; I could make her laugh anytime. I love to read something other than law in my spare time.

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#### ARNOLD C. NYE, AGE: 86

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1949

Military Experience: U.S. Navy (1943-46)

Ensign USS Solomons CVE 67

**My Story:** I am a veteran of World War II and was an ensign serving aboard the USS Solomons CVE 67. I enlisted while still in high school at age 17. Shortly thereafter, in November 1943, I was called up and attended the U.S. Navy V-5 program at Warrensburg, Mo. After completing the assigned courses, I was transferred to Northwestern University in Chicago, graduated and was commissioned as an ensign in the U.S. Navy.



**Arnold C. Nye**

While assigned to the USS Solomons we patrolled the east coast of the U.S. and acted as a qualifier aircraft carrier for new pilots. Two other officers and I were assigned 24 hour shifts continuing as long as we were out to sea. We would split the shifts into four hours on and 12 hours off with a "dog watch" from 2 to 4 a.m. and 4 to 6 a.m. so that we would not always have the same four hours on duty.

I was honorably discharged at the close of the war in 1946. The USS Solomons was decommissioned in the spring of 1946 at Norfolk, Va. Thereafter, I graduated from KU Law School.

I have practiced law continuously in Newton, Kan., since 1949 and recently qualified my continuing education hours for another year; I have been an active member of the Kansas Bar Association since my admission to practice in 1949. In 2009, I was recognized by the Kansas Bar Association at their annual meeting and award dinner in Overland Park when I was presented a "60-year pin." There were two of us old-timers attending.

I would like to make a few comments about the many years of being a practicing attorney: It seems like "yesterday"

when I was the newest lawyer in town and needed help in finding the courtroom and the county courthouse. Today, I am the senior lawyer in our local bar association of about 25 members. I recall professional contact with some of our local lawyers that are now gone: J.G. Somers, Bernard Peterson, Vernon Stroberg, Alfred Schroeder (formally chief justice), Fred Ice, John Thomas Reid (federal magistrate judge), and many others.

**Personal:** I have been married 65 years to my wife, Kathryn; we were high school sweethearts. We have three children: Gregory Nye, a partner at our firm, Pam Behymer, and Christopher Nye, an attorney in Idaho.

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**DONALD PATTERSON, AGE: 86**

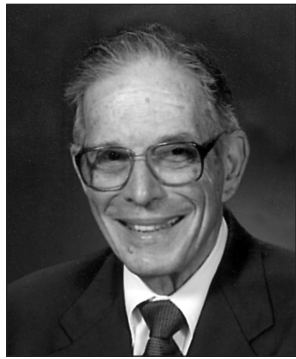
Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1950

Military Experience: U.S. Army (1942-46)

Corporal

**My Story:** I was a tank gunner, corporal, and pathfinder in Europe. Our tank crew was one of the liberators of the Dachau Concentration Camp. What we saw and smelled there is beyond description. I had nightmares over it for 20 years. I was in the second tank that arrived, but we were not the first to arrive at the camp itself. I think forward elements of the 42nd Division and the 45th Division arrived about 1 p.m., and we did not get there until about 4 p.m., but the camp was not yet secure. All guards were SS who had taken an oath that they would never surrender, and most of them did not. The camp was far from secured when we arrived; I and several others took out a guard tower. I had used the tank commander's 50 caliber. I was with the guy that took the pictures later released to the press by army intelligence.



**Donald Patterson**

from secured when we arrived; I and several others took out a guard tower. I had used the tank commander's 50 caliber. I was with the guy that took the pictures later released to the press by army intelligence.

**Military Airfield at Munich**

Two memorable events occurred. On the way in, I fired the luckiest shot that was ever fired by anybody in World War II. While the tank was still moving, and the gun was at right angles to the axis of the tank, I knocked out with one shot an 88 battery that was pointed directly at us. It was simply a question of which gun could get its shot fired first. Ours was smaller but easier to aim. Normally, one never fired the tank gun while moving because vibration made aiming impossible. We were on level ground, firm, and going in second gear, which is about 4 mph, so I could draw a bead on the target and let the shot fly, hoping I was lucky, and I was.

The second event was that after arriving, we saw three Germans, two of whom were dressed up in women's clothing, make a break for it across a concrete apron. One had a broken arm. His right arm was in a cast, but positioned in a very high, awkward position. Forty-two years later, at a reunion, we were told the guy with the broken arm was Werner Von Braun, the founder of our NASA.

**Omar Bradley**

The 20th and 27th Battalions were positioned in the Bavarian Alps blocking the Brenner Pass and my battalion, the 27th, had dug in at the other pass that blocked off all aid, fuel, food, ammunition, etc., to the German forces in Italy. On May 6, 1945, Field Marshal Kesselring surrendered to the 20th Armored Division, and for us, the war in Europe was over. A day or two after the surrender, the first sergeant went around the encampment; barked off a number of names that made no sense at all because they were all ranks; told us to report to company headquarters in twenty minutes with our "piece," a stupid submachine gun we called "the grease gun," but we were not told where we were going.

We jumped into trucks, asked where we were going, and the usual answer was "none of your business." We ended up in the courtyard at Salzburg surrounded with government buildings. A loud speaker said that all 27th Battalion Tank personnel were to be in the front rank and that included me. The guy to my left was Johnny Nairn from Pawnee Rock, Kan.

I looked out of the corner of my eye to the right and saw a German staff car drive up, and a guy with scrambled eggs on the bill of his cap was handing his sword over to another U.S. Army man whose back was turned. That man turned around, had four stars on his helmet, and was easily recognized as Omar Bradley. The man behind him had three stars, Gen. Patch, commander of the 7th Army, and the guy behind him had one star, Orlando Ward, commander of the 20th Armored Division. He carried the clip board. It was obvious that Bradley was going to review the troops, which he did by stopping at every 7th guy.

I counted down. He was going to miss me, but he was going to get John Nairn, the first guy to my left. Bradley passed directly in front of me by a distance of probably less than two feet. When he stopped in front of Nairn and said, "What's your name soldier?" Nairn replied, "Sergeant John Nairn, sir." Bradley: "Where are you from?" Nairn: "Pawnee Rock, Kansas, sir." Bradley: "I know right where that is, it is on Highway 56." (Bradley was from Missouri and knew the territory.) Bradley, pointing to the grease gun, "Did you ever have to use that son?" Nairn, "No sir." Bradley, "Would you use anything?" Nairn, "Yes sir." Bradley, "What did you use?" Nairn, "Luger." (We all had captured Lugers; they worked better.) Bradley, "Carry on." We were in the 3rd Army for a period of time, but later were transferred to the 7th. I never saw Gen. Patton.

**Personal:** Married to his wife, Mary, for 64 years. They have two children: Bruce, 54, a registered nurse in Columbia, Ohio, and Nancy, 51, a housewife married to a retired lieutenant colonel and former deputy chaplain at West Point.

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**LESTER C. ARVIN, AGE: 87**

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1947

Military Experience: U.S. Army National Guard (1943-46)

Staff Sergeant

**My Story:** I enlisted at the age of 19, while a sophomore at Ottawa University. I served from 1943-46. I was initially in Honolulu, which, at the time, was a U.S. territory. I served



in the intelligence corps and was on the Mariana Islands. I was a part of the invasion of Saipan, 27th Infantry, along with the 1st Marine Division. Saipan was critical to the bombing missions into Japan. Our job was to interrogate remaining Japanese but there were none left – they committed suicide as a preference over being captured. I served to review and approve all mail communications from soldiers and civilians to the states.



**Lester C. Arvin**

Before the Saipan invasion, I was first assigned to the G2 Intelligence Section at Command Headquarters for the Pacific at Fort Shafter, Honolulu, in March 1943. At that point, the population of the five main Hawaiian Islands was about 75 percent Japanese. Because of this, the commanding general, Gen. Richardson, declared martial law. One implication of this was that all publications, telephone, and radio on the islands were censored. G2 was given this responsibility.

Initially, I worked in telephone censorship, but it eventually became clear that more help would be needed to do this job. As a result, the War Department enlisted a number of women from the mainland to come over and assist. Seeing an opportunity, I clandestinely made arrangements for my fiancée, Kay, to travel to San Francisco, apply to the War Department, and get stationed in Hawaii to perform one of these tasks. This was possible because, as a member of G2 Intelligence, my own mail was, of course, uncensored.

Because this kind of thing was naturally forbidden, Kay and I had to pretend to have met in Hawaii, which required a measure of discretion. We worked together for some time, until I was shipped out to Saipan with the 27th Infantry Division to help set up G2 services there. Our responsibilities included examining captured Japanese military equipment, as well as monitoring telephone traffic on and off the island. Once the island was cleared of Japanese, I returned to Hawaii and was assigned once again to telephone censorship.

I married Kay on a spectacular day on May 13, 1945, at the St. Clement's Church, with my best friend at my side and the Pacific Ocean in the background. I was discharged in October 1945, attended Washburn and graduated in 1947. I practiced in Wichita for 60 years, after which I moved with Kay to Nashville to be near my two sons.

**Personal:** Les and Kay have been married 65 years. They have two sons: Reed Arvin (an accomplished mystery writer) and Scott, the CEO of an Internet company. Kay graduated from Washburn Law School in 1951 and was the first woman district court judge, appointed by Gov. Bennett. Les served as a staff sergeant, the only enlisted man in his unit.

#### **AUBREY J. BRADLEY, JR., AGE: 87**

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1949-2006

Military Experience: U.S. Air Force (1944-55)  
Pilot

**My Story:** In 1942 I was a sophomore at the University of Kansas and was 18 years old when Pearl Harbor was attacked.

I enlisted in the Army Reserve but I wanted to be a pilot so I transferred to the Army Air Corps Reserve. I trained in the South East Flying Command, became a B-17 pilot and was sent to England in 1944.



**Aubrey J. Bradley, Jr.**

We were flying from Deenethorpe, England.

I had flown 32 missions without a scratch. On the 33rd mission (the last bombing raid over Europe and Hitler's birthday) the first burst of flak hit the No. 4 engine and set us on fire. I told the crew to bail; my co-pilot and I were still in the cockpit when the right wing exploded throwing us into a spin. We were spinning out of control and the left wing folded. We were taught you

could not recover from a spin. Both of us were drawn out of the aircraft (I believe by the hand of God). As we parachuted down we landed in different places. I landed in a field and was met by very angry Germans who had been ordered by Hitler to shoot any enemy fliers on sight. Farmers were there in a plowed field. I learned later it was Brandenburg, Germany. The date was April 20. I was kicked by many of them but soon a German command car came to my rescue. I was taken to a local command post where I was interrogated by a German army first lieutenant; Adolph Hitler Division was on his uniform jacket plus SS insignia.

After brief questioning, I was grudgingly given a cup of ersatz coffee and a crust of black bread. After about two hours, I was taken to a school building, which was a command center, and questioned again by a German general and his whole retinue of officers (about 20). In both interrogations I gave them only my rank and serial number. I complained about my head wound; an army corporal cut some of my hair away from the wound – nothing more. I was then taken to a flak detachment building (the one that had shot us down), where I stayed for two days – black coffee and black bread again. Eventually, I was taken to a basement room of another school building, where I saw other prisoners, amongst them my co-pilot with a broken right leg.

I had been confined for about two weeks when I saw my first Russian soldier who told us we were to be liberated the next day. (The German guards had already run away.) I was back in England several weeks later. The war was over in Europe; the date was May 8, 1945.

I was awarded the Purple Heart, Prisoner of War Ribbon, and Air Medal with five clusters.

I received my law degree from Kansas University in 1949. Emerson Shields was in law school with me and we were in the Reserve together.

In 1951, I was recalled as a legal officer in a Reserve Unit and stationed in England. At that time, all pilots were required to maintain flying proficiency. On January 5, 1952, I was sitting on a taxi strip waiting my turn to take the runway when a U.S. Navy plane crash landed and turned 180 degrees into my plane. I sustained severe burns and was in and out of hospitals for about four years. In 1956, I resumed law practice in Wichita and after 50 years of practice I retired.

**Personal:** Married Audrey on June 8, 1945, and have been

married for 65 years. We met in England and we have two daughters: Diane Bradley Holmes (deceased in 1992) and Janet Bradley Jungenann.

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**ROBERT L. BATES, AGE: 88**

Kansas Lawyer  
Admitted: 1953

Military Experience: U.S. Army Air Force  
1st Lieutenant

**My Story:** I went into the Army from my hometown of Hingham, Mass., at the age of 18. I was assigned to the Army Air Force and became a navigator. I flew in 30 missions out of England. I was also recalled for service in the Korean War.



**Robert L. Bates**

The most memorable experience was when we were flying a new B-17 plane from Nebraska to Newfoundland and on to Scotland. We encountered problems with the plane from the beginning. After we left Newfoundland and were approaching the Irish coast, we encountered a major storm over the Atlantic; we lost an engine and were low on fuel. Not knowing what to expect, we gathered up all of our personal information from the plane and threw it out into the ocean so we could not be identified unless we wanted to be identified. We had to land the plane in the bay at Donegal, Ireland. The plane was in the water and we walked through the water to the beach. I was the last one of the 10 crew members aboard to leave the plane. No one was hurt in the crash landing. In Donegal, we created quite a bit of excitement. The whole town came out and welcomed us and treated us well; the date was February 23, 1944. The next day, we were going to North Ireland to catch a train to London. One of our new friends gave us a bottle of whiskey to drink on the way. We stayed in London for a couple of days before rejoining our group.

I returned to Ireland twice to revisit the scene and the people who befriended us. My total service to the country was five years.

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**ALFRED HOLL, AGE: 89**

Kansas Lawyer  
Admitted: 1949

Military Experience: U.S. Army Air Corps (1942-66)  
Lieutenant Colonel, Retired

**My Story:** My enlistment date into the Army Air Corps, now U.S. Air Force, was June 12, 1942. I hitchhiked from Hays, where I was attending college, to Fort Riley on old U.S. Highway 40.

It was required to pass a mental test, and if passed, a physical test before one was accepted and sworn into the Air Corps. By my request and qualifications, I was accepted as a navigator, which required 10 weeks in pre-flight and 18 weeks

in navigation school, nine weeks of dead reckoning and then nine weeks of celestial.

After graduation, I was a second lieutenant and was assigned to a B-24 crew of 10 men. We picked up a new B-24 at the Topeka Air Base and flew it to Great Britain by way of Goose Bay, Labrador, then to Iceland, and then to Great Britain. After six missions in a B-24, we were changed to a B-17 in which we flew 30 missions. I had two bombardiers sitting in front of me shot up so badly that they never flew anymore missions. The last was December 30, 1944. That was the



**Alfred Holl**

last time I have been shot at. I stayed in the Air Force Reserve and after 24 years, retired as a lieutenant colonel.

When Pearl Harbor occurred, I was teaching the upper grades in Denmark, Kansas. Judge Ed Larsen was a 4th grader in the school. I was living at the Lutheran minister's parsonage. The night of December 7, 1941, the minister, the Rev. Nielson, said to me, "This will have more effect on you than you now realize." He was right!

**Personal:** Married to wife, Louise Luce, for 60 years, deceased in 2000. They have two daughters: Carol Ann Lang and Barbara Painter. He was a Kansas attorney from 1949-50 and is retired general counsel of a major gas transmission company.

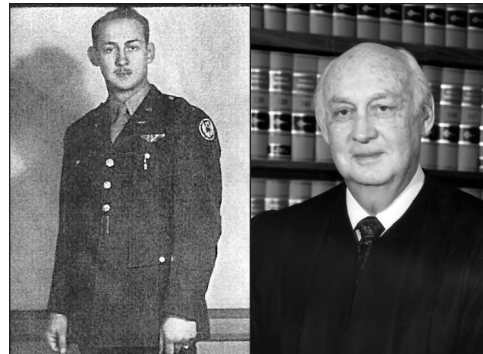
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**RICHARD D. ROGERS, AGE: 89**

Kansas Lawyer  
Admitted: 1947

Military Experience: U.S. Army Reserve (1941-45)  
Captain

**My Story:** "I was a junior at K-State when Pearl Harbor hit us. K State was a land grant college and two years of ROTC was required. I then enlisted in advanced ROTC in the Infantry and took two more years.



**Richard D. Rogers**

About two weeks after the Japanese raid, I was a corporal (mandatory) in the Army Reserve. I was allowed to graduate on a speeded-up schedule and finished my ROTC training. However, I had not been to summer camp, so I went to Fort Benning as a corporal and became a second lieutenant in the Infantry at graduation from Fort Benning.

I was assigned to Camp Wolters in Texas and taught basic training. They wanted me to be on cadre at Camp Wolters, but I was young and foolish, and wanted to go overseas. I transferred to the Army Air Corps as a second lieutenant and went



to bombardier-navigator school in Texas. Upon graduation, I joined my crew on a B 24 bomber at El Paso, Texas. I then went to Italy and joined the 744th Bombardment Squadron, 456th Bombardment Group, and 15th Air Force.

I flew 33 missions to Germany, Austria, and Poland. My crew finished their 35 missions and went home. However, I was squadron bombardier, briefing bombardiers, and I was not allowed to complete my missions. Twenty-five missions in England gave you a 50-50 chance of survival and 35 missions in Italy gave you a 50-50 chance of survival. Originally, we did not face the fighter planes they faced in England. This changed near the end of the war when the Germans built the ME-262 jet plane that flew 100 miles faster than the P 51 American fighter plane.

As a lead bombardier, I led 350 planes to Newberg, Germany, where we destroyed the factory and air field for the ME- 262. I have the pictures and intelligence report for this raid. It was very successful.

After my crew went home, I led a raid where we dropped fragmentation bombs on the German Army facing the British 8th army in Italy. I did this for two days in a row. About three weeks later, the British 8th army broke through the German defenses and went clear to the Brenner Pass in Austria. This ended the war in Italy.

I also participated in a raid on an oil refinery at Oswiecim, Poland, where our plane was shot up to a great extent. We lost one engine and our oxygen system. We went down to 10,000 feet and the rest of our Air Force went back to Italy at 22,000 feet. We called for help to get home as we would be shot down by the German Air Force flying alone. We were lucky that Col. Ben Davis' Tuskegee Airmen were on the raid, and two P 51s took us all the way back to Yugoslavia before they had to leave us for lack of fuel. This group never lost a damaged plane during the war.

On December 7, 1944 in Italy, I received the Distinguished Flying Cross along with air medals for my missions.

When the war in Europe ended, my bombardment group was returned to the United States. We were sent home for 30 days and then were to train in B-29s to go to Japan for missions. While I was home, President Truman dropped the big bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and I was able to obtain a discharge. I entered KU Law School in September 1945. Two and one-half years later I was practicing law in Manhattan.

My brother, who was two years older, spoke Spanish and he spent World War II in South America. However, he stayed in the Army and had a difficult time in the Korean War. I was called up for a physical examination, but I had a family, and the Air Corps had no need for a B-24 bombardier.

I flew many of my missions as a lead bombardier mainly because my pilot had flown many hours training gunners, and I rode on his coattails because he was so well-qualified to fly as a leader. I have lost any connection with my crew and do not believe the other officers are still alive. Because they returned ahead of me, I lost all trace of their locations.

World War II was a great experience for me. We were shot up many times, but no crew member was ever wounded. Many planes in our group were lost during the war.

**Personal:** Married to Beth Stewart (40 years, deceased) and second wife, Cynthia Tilson Conklin (23 years). They have three daughters and two sons.

## GLEE SMITH, AGE: 89

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1947

Military Experience: U.S. Air Force (1943-45)

1st Lieutenant

**My Story:** I enlisted in the Army Air Corps in May 1942, having previously tried the Navy Air Corps, and was unable to pass the physical. I was accepted by the Army Air Corps, but wasn't called to duty until February 1943. This call



Glee S. Smith

cut me three months short of finishing my senior year at Kansas University. However, later, when I was discharged from the Air Force, KU had a program set up to evaluate service that returning veterans had been doing. Therefore, when I was discharged, I received more than enough credits to complete my degree, retroactively, with the class of 1943. I

immediately enrolled in the law school in October 1945. With an accelerated program, I received my law degree in 1947 and immediately went to Larned to enter law practice with Maurice Wildgen.

My first service was with the Army Air Corps, and that was the designation of my service until October 1945 when the Army Air Corps became a separate branch designated as the U.S. Air Force.

I received my commission as a second lieutenant in the Army Air Corps in December 1943 and was selected as an instructor at the Army Air Force base in San Marcos, Texas, where I had just graduated.

I married Geraldine Buhler, who had been a KU classmate of mine, and we set up housekeeping in the small city of San Marcos, Texas, where I spent the next 15 months as an instructor. In March 1945, I was transferred to Westover Field, Springfield, Mass., for transition into B-24s. During that assignment, the war in Europe ended, and I was next assigned to Selman Field, Monroe, La. While I was there, the war in the Pacific ended, and I was transferred to Biloxi, Miss. – and then Lincoln, Neb., for transition into B-29s. Within a short time, I was transferred to Sioux Falls, S.D., for ultimate discharge, and I was able to enroll in law school in October 1945.

I practiced law in Larned, Kan., starting in 1947 and I am still "of counsel" to my Larned firm, Smith, Burnett and Larson. I moved to Lawrence, Kan., in 1991 and became affiliated as "of counsel" with the Barber Emerson firm. I have practiced law for 64 years.

**Personal:** Geraldine and I have been married 67 years with three children – G. Sidney Smith III, who graduated from KU Law School in 1970, did a career as a Navy JAG officer, and is currently living in Alexandria, Va.; our second child, Stephen Buhler Smith, graduated from KU Medical School in 1974; and our third child, Susan Moeser, has a doctorate in organ performance from KU and has been a professor of organ at Nebraska University and the University of North Carolina.

**WILLIAM J. MULLINS, JR., AGE: 90**

Kansas Lawyer

Admitted: 1960

Military Experience: U.S. Army (1942-74)

Brigadier General, Retired

Enlisted on June 27, 1942, with the U.S. Army, Anti-Tank Company, 318th Infantry, 95th Infantry Division at Camp Swift, Texas. Upon completion of basic training, he attended Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Ga., and was appointed second lieutenant of the Infantry on March 9, 1943, and assigned as platoon leader, Anti-Tank Company, 273rd Infantry, 66th Infantry Division. Deployed to Europe in June 1944 and assigned to Company K, 318th Infantry, 80th Infantry Division. Remained with Company K until the end of the war.



**William J. Mullins, Jr.**

**Reserve:** Enlisted in Kansas Army National Guard in 1949; occupied numerous positions thereafter in the 137th Infantry, culminating in the command of the second BN 137th Infantry on October 6, 1967, and served in that capacity until the battalion in May 1968 and was ordered to active duty in the Pueblo Crisis. I then served in the Republic of Vietnam from May 1969 until November 1969 as deputy chief, Revolutionary Development Cadre Division, MACV. I was discharged from active duty in December 1969, returned to Guard duty and retired as a brigadier general on June 25, 1979.

**Decorations and Awards:** Among others, Silver Star Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, and other campaign medals; Joint Service Commendation Medal; Army Commendation Medal; American Service Medal; World War II Victory Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with three stars; Army of Occupation Medal; and National Defense Service Medal.

**My Story:** I enlisted in the U.S. Army on June 27, 1942, at Springfield, Mo., and was sent by bus to Jefferson Barracks near St. Louis for processing. There I was given a physical exam and took an oath to support and defend the U.S. Constitution. I also was issued basic supply needs. I was also given classification exams.

In the middle of July, I was assigned to the 95th Infantry Division, located at Camp Swift, Texas, about 30 miles south of Austin. After completion of my basic training, I was promoted to corporal in charge of a 37MM anti-tank gun squad and later was made a member of the Cadre to train new recruits.

On December 8, 1942, I reported to the Infantry Officers Candidate School located at Fort Benning, Ga. I graduated as a second lieutenant on March 8, 1943, and was assigned to the Anti-Tank Company 263rd Infantry, 66th Infantry Division at Camp Blanding, Fla. I spent the next year-and-a-half training my platoon at various locations, to wit: Camp Blanding, Fla., Camp Robinson, Ark., and Camp Gordon, Ga.

On June 11, 1943, I married my college sweetheart. We had met at Southwest Missouri State University at Springfield, Mo. Her name was Miller and we were seated alphabetically in a math class. I was a junior with a lot of college math under my belt and she was a freshman. She asked me if I would help her with her homework and I was glad to do so. We later decided to get married when I was in the Army and stationed at Camp Blanding, near Jacksonville. I located a minister in Jacksonville who would marry us. Marilyn was a Baptist, I was a Methodist, and the minister was a Presbyterian. Our marriage was definitely ecumenical. The minister's wife was a witness. The female manager of the hotel, where I had reserved a room, was the other witness. We have been married now for 67 years.

When I went overseas, Marilyn wrote to me nearly every day. Her letters usually arrived in batches of six or seven. If I was occupying a fox hole at that time, I would dig out extra space at the side of my hole for a candle to be placed and read my letters at night over and over again by candlelight.

In June 1944, I started my deployment to Europe. I landed at Omaha Beachhead on July 15. Barrage balloons were still up and, over the P.A. system, the band was playing "The Missouri Waltz" as I walked up the beachhead trails carrying all my luggage. At the replacement depot, I was informed that there was a need for infantry officer (but not anti-tank officers). I was asked if I would accept an assignment to an Infantry Rifle Company. I said "yes" but I doubt if it would have mattered how I answered that question.

In any case, on August 24, 1944, I became platoon leader of the second Platoon of Company K, 318th Infantry, 80th Infantry Division. The company was "dug in" southwest of Normandy, France. We spent most of August, September, and October conducting scouting raids, improving our defenses and night activities to capture prisoners. This was the period of the famous "Sitzkrieg." It was dirty, nasty fighting. This lasted until November 1, 1944, the date of the offensive to drive all Germans from northeast France. After attacking about a week, the Achilles tendons near my ankles became swollen to the extent that I could hardly walk. I went to a medical aid station for relief. I expected to return that day to my platoon. However, the next day, I was in Paris and the next week in a hospital in England.

I was in an American hospital from December to February 20, 1945. I reported back for duty to Company K on March 1, 1945. On March 3, my platoon attacked Clausen. While I was riding on the back of a medium tank, which was supporting our attack, and I was giving directions to the enclosed tank commander, the tank was destroyed by a German rocket. The tank crew bailed out and I found myself alone on the back of the tank. Shortly thereafter, we received instructions to cancel the attack. We were relieved the next day by units





**William J. Mullins, Jr. (second row, far right)**

of the 13th Armored Division. My runner, my first squad sergeant, and my medic were killed in this action.

On March 11, 1945, near Zerg, Germany, my platoon destroyed many enemy positions delaying my company's advance, halted an enemy counter attack, captured three artillery pieces, a tank, and an ammunition truck, thereafter, during March and April of 1945, my company, as a part of the 80th Division, destroyed enemy resistance across Germany in Mainz, Erfurt, and ended in Chemnitz, Czechoslovakia.

Late in April, I led the American battalion in a victory parade, with the Russians, in Pilzen, Czechoslovakia. Early in May, Company K moved, by motor convoy, to Branau, Austria. We continued attacking south to Vocklebruck, where, on May 7, the war in Europe ended. During the war, Company K lost five officers and 100 enlisted men – killed in battle.

**Note:** My wife and I went back to France in 1985 and visited Normandy. This is the town where the battle lines were located in 1944. We found the remains of several foxholes left by my platoon in 1944. Strange, still, we found a plaque commemorating the fact that units of my division, the 80th, had served their country at that same location in 1918.

**Personal:** Bill and Marilyn have been married for 67 years. They have a son, William J. Mullins, III. ■

#### *About the Author*

*Matthew Keenan has practiced with Shook, Hardy & Bacon since 1985. He may be reached at [mkeenan@shb.com](mailto:mkeenan@shb.com).*

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