

30 DAYS OF HONOR ★ *A Salute to Local Vets*

'I'm just a proud American soldier'

Wally Rozella was impressed by the people of Korea and honored to serve his country

By Karla Swita

For Gannett Central Wisconsin Media



DAN YOUNG/GANNETT CENTRAL WISCONSIN MEDIA
Korean War veteran Wally Rozella participated in a Never Forgotten Honor Flight in 2013.

MOSINEE — Visitors to Wally Rozella's neighborhood tavern in Mosinee readily pick up on his humble patriotism, as he's quick to serve guests in the homey gathering space.

It's where he welcomes strangers like friends and saves a stool for fellow VFW Post 8733 comrades. He's front and center at the tap of the horseshoe-shaped bar and happy to share a story or show his collection of Korean War patches.

In 2013, he was honored for that duty by joining fellow vets on the Never Forgotten Honor Flight out of Central Wisconsin Airport. "Oh, it was a real experience," said Rozella about seeing the memorials in Washington, D.C. "I made sure to take it all in."

Question: What is your most enduring memory from your time in the service?

Answer: The Korean civilians were super people. They were honest, hard workers and really knew how to work the land.

Q: What did you do in the service and where were you stationed?

A: I served in the U.S. Army. I arrived at Fort Ord, California, for training. We went under the Golden Gates and it was off to Korea to the front lines. Our troop ship landed at Incheon Bay. I was in the 35th Infantry Regiment 25th Division. I used a .45 (caliber gun), an M1 and a mortar. I was good at all of them.

Q: What do you most want people to know about the conflict in which you served?

A: It was an honor to serve.

Q: Tell us about your life after the service and how your time in the military affected your civilian life.

A: I was sick with pneumonia and was sent back to the States on the USNS Marine Adder and discharged from the service. I was anxious to get back to civilian life. I worked at 3M in Wausau for over five years and then bought the bar (Wally's Bar in Mosinee) in 1958. I had five years in the reserves and was involved with the VFW. I'm just a proud American soldier.

Q: What did going on the Honor Flight mean to you?

A: It was quite a chance of a lifetime. I met a lot of nice people. It was a real experience to see the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, who is guarded 24 hours a day.

ABOUT WALLY ROZELLA

Age: 88

Residence: Mosinee

Conflict involved in: Korean War

Military branch: Army

Years of service: 1951-1952

Rank at discharge: Sergeant



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Wally Rozella says that during the Korean War, "I used a .45 (caliber gun), an M1 and a mortar. I was good at all of them."



A FLIGHT TO NEVER FORGET

» The Central Wisconsin chapter of Never Forgotten Honor Flight celebrates its fifth anniversary this spring. Since April 2010, the Honor Flight program has taken more than 1,700 veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam from Central Wisconsin Airport to Washington, D.C., to view the memorials built in honor of their service.

» 30 Days of Honor is a project of Gannett Central Wisconsin Media to profile veterans who have taken an Honor Flight, or are scheduled, and to encourage more veterans to do so. Profiles will appear each day April 26 through Memorial Day.

» Veterans may apply for a free Honor Flight (or loved ones may apply for them) by filling out an application. The only qualification for a veteran to take an Honor Flight is to have served in any branch of the U.S. military during the periods of World War II, the Korean War or Vietnam War. Veterans do not have to have been in combat. The applications and more information are available at www.neverforgottenhonorflight.org.

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