



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



Navy vet traveled the world in wartime

Schulrud wants the men who were lost to be remembered

By Dan Richter
For Gannett Central Wisconsin Media

Born and raised in Wausau, Roger Schulrud left home just three days after he turned 17. "I wanted to travel, I always liked the water, so I decided to join the Navy," said Schulrud, now 81. "I was going to vocational school but decided I could learn a trade in the Navy, so I did."

Throughout his 24-year career in the service, Schulrud spent a total of 18 years at sea, serving in both the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Here, Schulrud discusses how being a part of the Navy allowed him to see the world and how the Honor Flight reunited him with a face he hadn't seen in over 60 years.

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

Answer: I spent time on two 2,200-ton destroyers and two aircraft carriers, the USS Randolph and the USS Siboney. We mostly set off to search and rescue pilots. If a pilot got hit over land, they knew of the vicinity of where we'd pick them up, and I think we picked up seven or eight pilots. In Korea, planes flying around in the area had to identify themselves and we had to positively ID any planes. I also did two three-year periods training recruits at Naval Station Great Lakes from 1961 to 1964 and from 1971 to 1974.

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

A: There are a lot of things but mostly all the traveling I got to do. I made three round-trips through the Panama Canal to the Pacific, two through the Suez Canal to the Indian Ocean and once got to fly over the Persian Gulf because the Suez Canal was closed due to being filled with so many sunken ships. I've been as far east as India and Pakistan, as far west as Vietnam and Korea, have traveled north of the Arctic Circle and down around the southern part of Africa. I enjoyed it no matter where we went.

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

A: A lot of lives were lost in both wars. A lot of men went missing and their bodies were never found. Both wars were also political and I think if it's political, stay out of it.

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

A: I was in Waukegan, Illinois for awhile and then worked at a hospital in Chipewau Falls doing maintenance. I later got a job at Martin Luther Preparatory School in Prairie du Chien and was chief engineer there for 18 years. I handled the air conditioning, heating, plumbing, and everything else like that on-site, just like I did on our ships in the Navy. You can say I had 24 years of training in the Navy for a job I had 18 years.

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

A: It was enjoyable. When I was in Washington, D.C. years ago there was only one memorial and now there are so many. One of the guys on the Honor Flight named Billy Fergot, I enlisted at the same time as him back in 1950 and we hadn't seen each other again until that day. It was really something.

ABOUT ROGER SCHULRUD

Age: 81
Residence: Wausau
Conflicts involved in: Korean and Vietnam wars
Military branch: United States Navy
Years of service: 1950 to 1974
Rank at discharge: Senior chief machinist, E8



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Schulrud spent a total of 18 years at sea, serving in both the Korean and Vietnam wars.

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 1,828 veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam and 1,106 guardians 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 <http://www.neverforgottenhonorflight.org>



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Honored veteran
Roger Schulrud, of
Wausau, poses for a
photo Thursday at
his house.

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