



Ask the Secretary



Frank Cohee

It is always a pleasure – well, almost always—to receive responses to some of the articles that I write for the Ask the Secretary column.

Here are a couple responses to the articles that appeared in the Nov/Dec issue: *Lost Tombstone*.

I wrote “My wife and I have found a tombstone that came from out of nowhere. It has the name Richard McCane, Korean War inscribed on it.”

The response:

“I looked in the VA files and found a Richard Lee McCane, date of birth 06/06/1943 and date of death 4/20/2008. Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery, 200 Duall Road Schuyler, NY 12871-1121, Buried at Section 2 Site 281. If I can be further help, please let me know.”

J.D. Randolph

KWVA National Representative

My response to JD:

Thanks for the info. I don't know why I never thought to check the VA files, but I did not. I still have the telephone number of the person who reported finding the tombstone and just now called that number. I got their voice mail and left them a message. If and when I hear from them I will let you know.

Thanks again.

Stringing Us Along

Dear Secretary Cohee,

I have just read the article in the November-December 2008 “Graybeards” about the banjo bearing the names of seven soldiers. I doubt if the banjo dates from the Korean War. The service numbers are those issued to draftees during WWII.

Men who remained in the Regular Army after WWII and participated in the Korean War would have retained their original service numbers, but the numbers would be preceded by “RA.” Therefore, I conclude that the banjo dates to WWII. And, since all the signers were privates, they most likely had been recently inducted.

The two men whose service numbers begin with “32” or “42” were inducted from the II Corps Area (NY, NJ, DE), and the one

whose service number begins with “35” was inducted from the V Corps Area (OH, IN, KY, WV).

I hope that this information will be helpful. For more information about Army service numbers, please see <http://members.tripod.com/33rdscb/id49.htm>.

Col. Wilson A. Heefner, M.D.

AUS (Ret.)

Here is another request and response that might be of interest to a lot of you, especially those of you who very often participate in American/Korean activities – read ceremonies, dedications, parades, etc.

Hi Frank,

We will be dedicating our Memorial in Carson City NV on July 25, 2009. The band-leader we have has asked for marching band sheet music of the South Korean National Anthem. All that I can find is Korean folk music. I have no idea what it sounds like.

Do you know of any way that I can find some information or the music? All that I can think of is the Olympic Committee.

Thanks.

Angelo De Felice, President,

KWVA Chapter #305

Carson City NV

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The sheet music lyrics were sent to Angelo along with the below English translation. Thanks to my young friend, Jamie Wiedhahn.

English Translation

Until the East Sea 's waves are dry, (and) Mt. Baekdusan worn away, God watch o'er our land forever! Our country forever!

Chorus

Rose of Sharon, thousand miles of range and river land! Guarded by her people, ever may Korea stand!

Like that Mt. Namsan armored pine, standing on duty still, wind or frost, unchanging ever, be our resolute will.

Chorus

In autumn's, arching evening sky, crystal, and cloudless blue, Be the radiant moon our spirit, steadfast, single, and true.

Chorus

With such a will, (and) such a spirit, loyalty, heart and hand, Let us love, come grief, come gladness, this, our beloved land!

Chorus

FAKE WAR HEROES

There is always the GOOD, the BAD and the UGLY. Following is the UGLY. I will not mention any names or service connection, but to think that one of our own members would disgrace the Korean War veterans and this organization is reprehensible and unforgivable.

Action has been taken to make sure this “FAKE” hero is never reinstated as a member of the KWVA. He claimed that he had seen action in Korea and had been awarded a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. He wore these medals and ribbons during the 2006 Memorial Day activities. The truth is that he was imprisoned for eight months and was given a bad conduct discharge. Not only did he wear the fake medals, but he altered his DD Form 214 and used these falsified discharge papers to join a local veterans group—read KWVA—and to get the Department of Veterans Affairs to pay almost \$22,000 in compensation and medical coverage.

Fortunately, in 2005, the Stolen Valor Act was enacted to preserve the sanctity of the nation's highest military awards for valor. However, over the last few years, the Stolen Valor Act has produced some forty prosecutions. But, even with the new threat of fines and imprisonment set forth in Public Law 109-437, signed by President Bush on December 20, 2006, phony veterans still want to call attention to themselves.

It gets worse. According to an article in the January issue of the VFW Magazine, of the 333 profiles that included claims for such awards as the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross and Air Force Cross of Silver Star, 103 appear to be fraudulent.

Please do not take the foregoing as a criticism of our fellow veterans who mistakenly have their ribbons out of order and most frequently have the Korean Presidential Unit Citation Medal upside down, with the red part of the circle on the bottom.