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# The Party Animal News

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## Heroes in Korea

When I was attending Purdue, one of the top rated television shows was M.A.S.H.. I remember walking to the lounge area of my dorm floor many times to watch this show with the other guys. In those days, only a few rare students had a TV in their room. Cary Quadrangle, where I lived, was the oldest residence hall at Purdue. When the semester began in August, a boxfan in the window was our air conditioning. No private bathrooms, and the toilets stalls did not have doors. A great college experience which students today would not tolerate.

The point of this story is that M.A.S.H. was my basic knowledge of the Korean War. I wouldn't educate myself until 34 years later. I have mentioned Emile Pappas in past newsletters. Emile worked in the pest control industry before he joined the fight in WWII, and at the age of 17 he was in the Pacific. When I first met him he was sitting in back of me at a fumigation continuing education class in Houston. At the time, I was recording any older pest control operators about the early years of pest control. Most of my recordings of Emile are pure gold. Ann and I became good friends with Emile and his wife Fran for many years.

They eventually moved from their Houston home to independent living in a high rise. One time I was visiting with them at this high rise and I was sitting between them as they watched a University of Houston football game on television. Fran was upset that Emile was reading a paper and not talking to me. It's a guy thing that didn't bother me. Guys don't have to talk. But Emile dropped his newspaper and started to tell me his experiences fighting in Korea. Emile told me he was in the Chosin Reservoir battle.

The book *Mortal Combat Korea, 1950-1953* by John Toland can give you a more detailed accounting of this particular battle. Between November 27 and December 13 of 1950, 120,000 Chinese troops encircled 30,000 United Nations Command troops lead by Major General Oliver P Smith. Wikipedia summarizes it's entry as follows, "The Battle of Chosin Reservoir is regarded by some historians as the most brutal in American history due to violence, casualty rate, weather conditions, and endurance." Toland's account of a Private Reeves escaping the Chinese is astonishing. One way he continued pushing forward was by singing childhood religious songs like *Jesus Loves Me*. He had many close calls. He was beaten by the Chinese and left for dead, but somehow got his mangled body up and continued to move south. It was a true miracle he survived.

Emile's story in the Chosin Battle is one of successful retreat. He had taped two cartridges end to end so he could quickly flip the cartridge to reload and he remembered running but able to fire back. He said he was lucky because he was small. The taller guys got shot first. He described that the Chinese were coming over the ice so they called in to have the frozen lake bombed. He also told me how they packed snow into their sleeping bags to trick the Chinese soldiers. They then spent a cold night hiding in the elements, but were able to attack the Chinese ambushers while they thought they were massacring the American soldiers in their bags.

Emile passed away on April 14, 2019 at the age of 93. His obituary stated he received two purple hearts. The reader would never know he was in one of the worst battles in U.S. history. If you know all the other war stories from Emile, this unassuming person was a true American hero. So if you ever revisit M.A.S.H., remember there were soldiers like Emile Pappas who survived and probably told few about their experience in Korea.

Pray for the troops this holiday season. -David

Please note that we will be closed Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> thru Jan 1<sup>st</sup>. Enjoy your Holidays!

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**White Christmas**

*Irving Berlin's three week old son died on Christmas day 1928. It was believed his song White Christmas, written by him years after the tragedy, tapped into his somber feelings around the season. It is thought to be one of the saddest Christmas songs. It was adopted as a song for the soldiers during WWII. Of course, it was popularized by the movies Holiday Inn and White Christmas. If you read about the Korean conflict, these soldiers would eventually be dreaming of any place warmer than Korea.*



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