

# Memories of the Korean War

## Charles Kennedy

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Sergeant Charles Kennedy – May 1953

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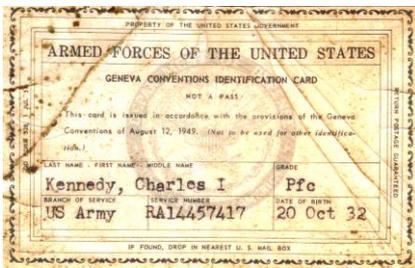
Upon graduation from Heflin High School in May 1950, I enrolled in Alabama Polytechnic



PVT Charles Kennedy - Mar 1952

Institute (now Auburn University) and enrolled in Pre-Veterinary Medicine. Since I attended classes in both summer quarters I finished Pre-Vet in February 1952. Therefore, because Veterinary school was completely filled for the fall of 1952 the draft board would not let me change my major or let me stay out of school until the fall of 1953.

Two other fellas living in the same dorm Magnolia Hall, had the same draft board problem. One was named Ellis and I can't remember the other name. Ellis talked me and the other fellow into going to Montgomery and talk to a recruiting Sergeant to see if we could get a better deal, than if we waited to be drafted. After being promised the moon, we signed up. Both of the others failed the physical and I was inducted into



PFC Charles Kennedy ID Card - Aug 1952

the Army at Maxwell Air Force Base on March 25, 1952. I was then sent to Fort Jackson, South Carolina for 16 weeks of Infantry Basic Training and then 8 weeks of Infantry Leadership School. I was promoted to PFC (Private First Class) upon entering the Leadership School and was to be

promoted to Corporal upon graduation, but during this time is when the Army froze all promotions, due to budget cuts.

I was given 10 days to travel from Fort Jackson, South Carolina to Camp Stoneman in California. I spent 7 days at home in Heflin, Alabama, then I flew from Birmingham to San Francisco and then took a bus to Camp Stoneman. My military records were lost for a few weeks somewhere between Fort Jackson and Camp Stoneman. Therefore I did not get to ship out with all the other fellows that went thru Leadership School with me. Then after about 3 weeks I was bussed over to Travis Air Force Base on a "shipment of one". I was the last person to be boarded on this MATS (Military Air Transport Service) Tiger Airlines flight. I was also the only enlisted man, all the others were Majors, Lieutenant Colonels and one Full Colonel. I had to sit in the only open seat that happened to be next to the Full Colonel. During the flight one engine had to be feathered and when we landed in Honolulu, Hawaii, we were advised they would be replacing that engine and we would be there for 3 days. The Colonel called one of his buddies that was in charge of a motor pool and had a jeep delivered to him, then he told me I was his driver. The next couple of days we explored the Island of Oahu. From Hawaii we flew to Midway, then Wake Island, to Yokohama, Japan and then we were bussed to Camp Drake. When our plane landed in Japan the sun was just coming up and I could see why the Japanese flag had the rising sun, it was beautiful.



Charles Kennedy - Apr 1953



Charles Kennedy - Apr 1953

At Camp Drake I caught up with some of the fellows from Fort Jackson. I was issued all winter clothing, given an M1 rifle and marched out to the rifle range to zero it in. That evening at about 10:00 pm we were loaded onto the troop ship Breckenridge and in 5 days we landed at Inchon, Korea.

Then we were loaded onto a train that had passenger cars with wooden seats. This train went forward for many hours then it backed up for almost the same. After 2 days on the train we were put into trucks and

driven to the US Army 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Replacement Company. Then after a few days I was assigned to the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment Replacement Company, then assigned to Company "L" around December 1, 1952. There I was assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon as Assistant Platoon Sergeant. This unit was on line at "Sandbag Castle". The Chinese line was only about 40 yards (less than half a football field) away. I was there on line for only 4 days when our Unit was replaced by the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division (from the book "The Coldest War" by James Brady). Our Unit was moved to a blocking position for the 14<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Regiments of the 25<sup>th</sup> Division.



Love Company Sign - Mar 1953

At the end of January 1953 the entire Division moved to a rear location and began training. This was a very mountainous terrain. While here there were snipers in the mountains and one morning a sniper killed a Major. Therefore patrols were organized to flush out the snipers. The patrol that I was assigned to was led by a Lieutenant from an ROTC Program. We started out as soon as it was daylight. It was so cold that the water froze in our canteens. The weather started to change to cloudy. Then in the middle of the afternoon the Sergeant and I discussed the directions we had taken and determined we were not going in the



Charles Kennedy & Billy J Griffin - Apr 1953

correct direction. The Sergeant discussed this with the Lieutenant and he agreed we were not in the area where the trucks were to be. After dark the terrain was so rough that we had to stop for the night. We built a fire in a place where rocks the size of very large truck, shielded the fire

from the cold wind. The temperature was 20 below that night. As soon as it was daylight we could see a large lake about 3 miles below us. We worked our way down the mountain and out on the lake which was frozen over. Soon a helicopter spotted us and by noon the trucks came

out on the lake and picked us up. We learned that West Point graduates were taught to trust the senior enlisted personal, but young ROTC officers often thought they knew everything.

Around the first week of May 1953 the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division moved back on line. The first night the loud speakers came on and said welcome Wolfhounds and then they played music. The 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment was west of Panmunjom and above the Imjin River and we resumed patrols almost every night. I hated going out on patrol to take a prisoner, this meant making contact with the enemy. Both times I that I was on such a patrol, we were lucky and successful. There was lots of artillery exchanges and almost constant bunker repairs.



Fellow Love Company Soldiers - Jun 1953

We maintained several outposts in front of the line. I was on “Pigs Outpost” for several days at several different times. The Chinese would shell the outpost for several hours, then assault up the hill. Our mortars and artillery would fire on the assaulting enemy. We would fire machine guns until the assault was over. With all of the mortars and artillery, you could not see anything out front except smoke and dust. In the last week of May the company was overrun by an enemy assault. The outposts in the sector changed hands several times and our unit had many casualties.



SGT Charles Kennedy - Jun 1953

I did not witness this battle. I had gone to Kyoto, Japan on R&R for 10 days, but due to bad weather the flight back to Seoul was delayed 5 days. Therefore when I got back to the unit around the June 1, 1953, all was quiet again.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July the artillery fired red, white and blue smoke rounds on the enemy lines very often. I think that was

to give us a moral boost. A few days later we were relieved by the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division again.

The Division was in reserve when the Cease Fire went into effect at 10:00 pm on July 27, 1953. Our equipment was loaded and then we were loaded on trucks ready to go to Manchuria if one shell had fired after 10:00 pm.

After the Cease Fire our unit was assigned to guard the railroad from Panmunjom to Seoul. There were guards at every bridge and a walking patrol. This was only during the exchange of prisoners. The Division moved back into the mountains around the middle of September 1953. From the MLR you could see Old Baldy out front and to the left about 5 miles away.



1st SGT Charles Kennedy - Oct 1953

Here on the back side of the mountain they graded out flat spots and built 2 Quonset Huts for the Kitchen/Dining Hall and for the CP/Supply Room. We also put up tents to sleep in. Here we maintained only 50% in the bunkers and on line.

I should have rotated from Korea by the middle of September 1953, but as the Army did unto me, they changed the rotation system. Therefore, I had to wait until January 1954.



L. T. Collins Troop Ship - Jan 1954

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1954, I left L Company and along with others from the 25<sup>th</sup>

Infantry Division we were trucked to Incheon. From there we boarded the L. T. Collins Troop Ship and headed for San Francisco.

# Sergeant First Class Charles I Kennedy

US Army 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division

27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment

Company L, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon

March 25, 1952 - February 17, 1954



Overseas Bars



Combat Infantryman Badge

Good Conduct Medal

United Nations Service Medal

National Defense Medal

2 Bronze Service Stars

Korean Service Medal



## The Korean War

The Korean War (25 June 1950 - 27 July 1953) between South Korea, supported by United Nations, and North Korea, supported by People's Republic of China.

## Sandbag Castle

Near the eastern end of the DMZ was one of our outposts where we spent a lot of time defending against the Chinese.



## North & South Korea Map

Map showing the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) between North & South Korea. Most of the time I was on line we were at outposts north of Seoul and Inchon. The outposts that I remember the best are “Sandbag Castle” and “Pigs Outpost”

