

Veterans of all eras share a common bond

Code: My name is Code. I was inducted in the Army from 1943 to 1946. Hell, I was 19 years old. I wasn't thinking about the future or anything. I was just thinking of going day by day. I was with the 78th hospital train attached to the 343rd Medical Battalion. We were running a hospital train all through Europe.

February 1945, our tracks were blown out in front of us. And our hospital train went down off the track down into a gully. I can still smell it. I can still hear them guys screaming. We just did what we had to do. I was walking through the train and I got thrown from one end of the car to the other. I got hurt. I lost part of my fingers on one. I still have some problems with my hands and all. And they kept on going. It got to me. Like I said, it still does.

From my outfit there is only one fellow left that I keep in touch with, and that's it. John and I shared a compartment on a train for 15 months. When you live in a compartment five-foot square with somebody for 15 months, then you know you've got a brother. When we came home from the service, the country was still tore up and making ammunition, and everything was under rations. It was hard to find a place to live. And if you didn't get a Dear John letter you were looking for your old high school sweetheart. You wanted to get married. You wanted to start a family. You wanted to find a job.

After the service was over, John and his wife would come to Pittsburg and spend a week or so with us. And the following year we would go back up to Rhode Island and spend time with him. There was another fellow in our outfit from Rhode Island, from Tiverton, Rhode Island. We all used to all get together.

I volunteer at the VA hospital two days a week. Some of these guys come in and they're terrific. You talk to them and you can joke around with them. They're all buddies. Very good friends. They went through their hardships. We have a group, mixed ages. I'm probably the only World War II Veteran there. But I have no trouble talking to a guy from Desert Storm. We get along swell. These guys, they open up and they talk about their family and stuff like that.

You went through the same hardship I went through, and the next guy did the same thing too. And there were also good parts to it and there were bad parts. You can walk up to any Veteran, he may be bitter as hell, and you put out your hand to him and shake his hand and talk to him and he's swell. The comradeship is great.



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